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IN CONFERENCE WITH THE  
BEST MINDS

## BY THE SAME AUTHOR

IN CONFERENCE WITH THE BEST MINDS

THE BELOVED COMMUNITY

MARJORIE PICKTHALL: A BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE

FIFTY YEARS OF PUBLIC SERVICE: A LIFE OF

JAMES L. HUGHES, LL.D.

ALBERT DURRANT WATSON: AN APPRAISAL

WESLEY AND THE NEW CATHOLICISM

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# IN CONFERENCE WITH THE BEST MINDS

*By* LORNE PIERCE

EDITOR OF THE UNITED CHURCH PUBLISHING HOUSE  
TORONTO, CANADA



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*To*  
EDITH CHOWN PIERCE  
CONJUGI ALMÆ CARISSIMÆQUE



## PREFACE

I HAVE had one main purpose before me during the years in which these chapters have been written. It is that of awakening and fostering a sense of the dignity and imperativeness of the Minister's calling. My work as Editor of the Methodist Book and Publishing House, Toronto, now the United Church Publishing House, for six years has brought me very closely in touch with the intellectual problems of the ministry. The following chapters contain not only a constructive criticism of certain obvious inconsistencies of the ministry, perhaps generally, but also a challenge to the minister to desire and claim the full-orbed splendor of his whole calling.

As prophets, the ministry must ever be distinguished by intellectual curiosity and adventure. Will there ever come a time when the teacher shall no longer be required? Only when all truth shall have been discovered and applied to the art of living, only then will the pulpit fall.

As priests, in an age of frenzied materialistic

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enterprise, the ministry must be constantly in contact with every available source of inspiration. Will the day ever come when the altar and the sacrament shall crumble and mold? Only when man shall feel no more the desire for completeness and Godlikeness, and when God shall have exhausted all the rich surprises of his love.

The act of worship, therefore, must speak to the deepest needs of men, and in the dialect of the newest truth and the freshest beauty. It must not only become more of a drama of the spirit, beautiful in holy array and wooing the spirit, by every exquisite symbol of love and truth, but also memorable as an enterprise of the community of the spiritually minded, completely satisfying, and creative.

The chapters of this book originally appeared in *The Christian Guardian* and *The New Outlook*, but have undergone numerous revisions.

Thanks for permission to republish these articles in revised form are due to these two journals.

LORNE PIERCE.

WESLEY BUILDINGS, TORONTO, CANADA.

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## A VITAL AND KINDLING MIND

DR. LORNE PIERCE has read widely. He has observed keenly. He has thought earnestly. And with this reading and observation and thinking he has written the book "IN CONFERENCE WITH THE BEST MINDS" concerning which I am glad to have the opportunity of writing a word of introduction. I have read all of the manuscript, and I can already anticipate something of the effect of this book upon the reader. It will rouse him if he is in a state of mental lethargy. It will quicken him if his mind is alert and eager. Dr. Pierce loves things which deserve to be loved. He dislikes things which deserve hearty distaste. And his keen sense of values will come to many another mind through the pages of this book. The bibliographical suggestions alone will be of very great value to ardent and inquiring minds. This is the sort of writing which sets the reader going. He will purchase more books because he has read this book. And he will spend happy and productive hours in their perusal. My best wishes go with this thoughtful volume as it enters upon its adventure among readers in the United States, the Dominion of Canada, and throughout the English-speaking world.

LYNN HAROLD HOUGH.





CHAPTER I  
IN CONFERENCE WITH THE BEST  
MINDS

What has exceedingly hurt you in time past, nay, and I fear, to this day, is, want of reading. I scarce ever knew a preacher read so little. And perhaps, by neglecting it, have lost the taste for it. Hence your talent in preaching does not increase. It is just the same as it was seven years ago. It is lively, but not deep; there is little variety; there is no compass of thought. Reading only can supply this, with meditation and daily prayer. You wrong yourself greatly by omitting this. You can never be a deep preacher without it, any more than a thorough Christian. O begin! Fix some part of every day for private exercises. You may acquire the taste which you have not: what is tedious at first, will afterward be pleasant. Whether you like it or no, read and pray daily. It is for your life; there is no other way; else you will be a trifler all your days, and a pretty, superficial preacher. Do justice to your own soul; give it time and means to grow. Do not starve yourself any longer. Take up your cross and be a Christian altogether. Then will all the children of God rejoice (not grieve) over you, and, in particular.—*John Wesley to John Premboth, August 17, 1760.*

## CHAPTER I

### IN CONFERENCE WITH THE BEST MINDS

LOVE sanctifies whatever it touches. It imparts to objects the quality of divinity, "and bows to the best symbol it may find for its hope." Since the loftiest edifices require the deepest foundations, we naturally expect that love, which towers aloft like some great, expansive cathedral dome, must have underneath it something profound and elemental and permanent. Somewhere there is a deep reverence for the absolute truth, beautiful and good, which, in spite of cynicism and disillusionment, imparts whatever of dignity and value there is in life. These are the great loyalties which lead life in the ways of peace and happiness.

Happiness is impossible to mere impulse, however generous and refined. Groping enthusiasm and undisciplined romanticisms tend to nothing permanently valuable. Comradeship is more permanent than those circumstances and affections which bring it into existence. For this reason the lasting alliances have been

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established upon lasting values, common blood, like creeds, similar interests. And while "plasticity loves new molds because it can fill them," still there is something in all men that instinctively dedicates itself to the permanent and the eternal.

The same impulse that compelled man to formulate ideals also instructed him how to construct idols. The root meaning is the same. Both testify to an inner necessity for something which would impart to thought and life value and significance. Both testify to an attitude toward life, establish a "hierarchy of goods and evils," and denominate a goal to all our striving.

Life might well be stated in terms of an eternal quest for the ultimate, in which love was the monitor. The proof that we were attaining would be found in a constant clarifying of our ideals of value, a steady purification of our loyalties, and the consciousness of a permanent quality being imparted to our happiness.

This is the age of conferences, retreats, and councils of one kind and another. People are getting together not so much to give reports



and juggle statistics as to readjust spiritual values and gain a new perspective. Nothing in life is more necessary. President Harding, before he assumed the full responsibilities of his office, called to himself the most public-spirited men of his nation in order that, in conference with the best minds, he might arrive at something like a real policy for all his people. President Wilson has said in "The New Freedom" that he never went into a conference without coming out stronger. There is an adjustment of ideal to life that comes only through common striving and mutual devotion. This was the permanent value of the old-time "experience meeting." Modern conferences and summer schools are a direct and natural outgrowth of these.

To those who are prevented from participating in these gatherings there is still open to us an equally rich conference with the best minds. And, while the location of our conference is chosen for us by circumstances and necessity, our members of conference are of our own choosing.

Cotton Mather tells us of a certain friend whose custom it was, "when he first arose in the

morning, to repair to his study, a study well perfumed with the meditations and supplications of an holy soul." Not one can hear those words without a thrill of pleasure at the remembrance of long uninterrupted hours spent in earnest and sincere searching in conference with the best minds. Some read for sermons and fail to see the beauty, like the old woman who gazed upon a wide moor with the sea behind and exclaimed: "What a grand place to dry clothes!" Others read in the spirit in which the poet walked in communion with his friend; when they had entered the shade of the forest he exclaimed: "Drop on your marrowbones, man! Here are violets!" The loftiest living still demands the deepest thinking, and the profoundest spiritual experiences. Preaching, like every other spiritual exercise, in order to survive, "must deal with and minister to some abiding necessity of the soul." The gods we worship carve their names on our faces and into our character. Those who saw certain of the followers of the Master "took knowledge that they had been with Jesus." One cannot hide the names of those with whom he has been in conference. Cyprian never passed a day

without reading something from Tertullian, and in calling for it, it was his habit to say, "Da Magistrum." A person cannot be small who has slept out under the stars; an individual cannot be insignificant who has sat at the feet of a master teacher. We return from such conferences with minds purified, exalted in spirit, carrying our cathedrals with us.

---

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CHAPTER II  
PERSONALITY AND THE PREACHER

Wilhelm von Humboldt, one of the most beautiful souls that have ever existed, used to say that one's business in life was first to perfect oneself by all the means in one's power, and secondly, to try to create in the world around one an aristocracy, the most numerous that one possibly could, of talents and characters.—*Matthew Arnold.*

Look where you may,  
You perceive how, when  
God would move the world,  
He raises up a man.

—*David Smith.*

## CHAPTER II

### PERSONALITY AND THE PREACHER

SOMETHING like a cyclone struck England some time ago when a critic of the Church, writing in *The Nation and the Athenæum* under the *nom de plume* "The Reverend," boldly asserted, and then elaborately set out to prove it, that nine persons out of ten were incapable and even impossible. He said:

The prospect of saving the Church in England by means of a sprinkling of good fellows is not hopeful. The blunt fact about the Church in not a few villages is that, to all intents and purposes, it is *dead*; and that in a great many more villages it is *dying*. The reasons for this state of things need no searching out. They are that the parsons are, in the main, lacking in intelligence, character, and spiritual experience. . . .

In many of our villages the Church plays a no more impressive part than the Buddhist temple in many a Japanese village.

A rural parson of gifts, who, at a diocesan conference, was troubled by the plea—for the entrance of gentlemen into the Church—flung at the tranquil assemblage the hard saying that "what the Church needs is not gentlemen, but bounders like Peter and Paul!"

The cure for this sorry state of affairs the energetic critic believed to be disestablishment



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and disendowment. In other words, the preacher had to qualify for his profession on a basis of fitness, be divested of all atrophying privileges, and made to succeed by exerting himself in competition with all other skilled workmen of the mind.

With many of the problems of the establishment we are not concerned and in no way affected, but every minister, no matter how excellent his qualifications may have been upon being admitted to the priesthood, is in constant danger of the tragic loss of his personality and effectiveness.

The ministry requires men with trained minds, minds that go on and on in self-discipline. The ministry demands spiritual specialists, and men with alert and fruitful imaginations. And the ministry also needs men who can dominate and direct. To the end of his days he must be able to say "I, Paul," through all the spiritual, social, and intellectual experiences of his parish. The ministry even requires men of a divine, disciplined egoism.

The chief crown and glory of the preacher is personality, a personality that looms large in any situation where minds and souls count.

Some one has said that it would almost be "worth while to be a preacher even if one never preached a single sermon, but just silently stood as a protest against the enforced evacuation of our souls from their human residences."

There are many ancient dangers which constantly threaten the preacher's personality. Some fancy that they can do all the work, attend all the meetings, teach the Bible class, call day and night, manipulate finances—and preach. Others imagine that they can fill their days with committee work and executive details, canter around to clubs and lodges, and in all things be "a community man"—and teach. Power is as bashful as a beaver. It does not thrive on movements and letterheads, and it wilts in hand-shaking drawing-rooms and ante-rooms.

Just to keep oneself a person is the hardest job in the world. "There is the pressure of the world of things and of the world of people, each pouring itself into the other." Then how can I keep my soul, myself, intact, and remain what I know I am, and become what I desire to be? A man must find some escape, some highway to the stars, for a man can only preserve his

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personality by reveling in his freedom. And again, a man can only achieve personality by—being seized with the fact that he stands in his privileged place because he is a bearer of burdens, heavily laden with the destinies, the bodies, minds, and souls of all the people.

James Reid in the Warwick Lectures on Preaching (1923-24), entitled "In Quest of Reality," discusses the question which we have raised. His lectures open with "The Preacher's Task." The first essential is that it is worth while. "Necessity is laid upon me." He treats in a very candid manner those ideas which to-day "are sapping the confidence of some men in the ministry." The final lecture is on "The Preacher Himself."

Stevenson was fond of speaking of the struggle of truth "in a man" seeking expression, how it "tears and blinds him." This is what others have called "Truth through Personality." "The truth we have to speak will shape our utterance." It will determine what kind of argument shall be considered legitimate. The personality itself will determine the nature of the appeal. "There is a kind of appeal which no preacher with a real message will ever use.

. . . There is a kind of success of which he will be ashamed." So, after all, as Phillips Brooks once said, "The preparation of a preacher is the making of a man." Reid says: "The faults of much preaching are not primarily faults of style in manner or method, but faults of character." John Milton had the same idea: "He who would not be frustrate in his hope to write well in laudable things, ought himself to be a true poem."

A preacher cannot carry conviction an inch beyond what he himself knows and is, unless, like Bunyan, he carries that fire in his own heart that he bids men beware of. His message may be defeated through fear, a sense of social or intellectual inferiority, a deed of failure, unpopularity, or conflict. It may be destroyed through a wrong sense of values, spurious sensationalism, arrogant superiority, lack of chivalry, the impossibility of thinking he may be mistaken, the tyranny of self, and many more.

Beyond and above all, preaching depends upon personality. Granted that one has the gift of expression, brains, sympathy, confidence in one's message, a whole-hearted zeal for men, and an utter abandonment and self-forgetful-

ness, one may still be a dismal failure. Commonplace, second-hand ideas cannot be made profound and moving with an impressive ministerial voice. The realities of life are not more real because they are chattered glibly over a carved pulpit. To descend from the mountain with an impressive commission one must have lived and agonized apart.

"Current is the coin  
Thou utterest, both in weight and in alloy,  
But tell me, if thou hast it in thy purse."  
(Dante, "*El Paradiso*.")

---

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CHAPTER III  
PROGRESSIVE PREACHING

It is no small heroism in these times to deal with anything new.—*Henry Drummond.*

I dragged my feet through desert gloom,  
Tormented by the spirit's yearning,  
And saw a six-winged Seraph bloom  
Upon the footpath's barren turning. . . .

And with a sword he cleft my breast  
And took the heart with terror turning,  
And in my gaping bosom pressed  
A coal that throbbed there, black and burning.

Upon the wastes, a lifeless clod,  
I lay, I heard the voice of God:  
"Arise, O prophet, watch and hearken,  
And with my will thy soul engird  
Through lands that din and seas that darken,  
Burn thou men's hearts with this, my Word."  
—*Alexander Pushkin, translated by Babette Deutsch.*



### CHAPTER III

#### PROGRESSIVE PREACHING

IT was one of Henry Drummond's chiefest distinctions, that he was able to retain the respect of both liberals and conservatives in theology, to find favor, as it were, with hot and cold, broad and narrow, high and low. Of course he did not succeed completely. Even the broad and sympathetic attitude of Jesus, and the "all-things-to-all-men" policy of Paul, were not generally understood. Drummond once read a paper before the Free Church Theological Society of Glasgow on "The New Evangelism" in which he said: "I do not know what the New Evangelism is, and it is because I do not know that I write this paper. I write because I ought to know and am trying to know." He boldly strikes out this thesis to begin with: "I mean (by the word evangelism) the methods of presenting Christian truth to men's minds in any form." "The New Evangelism, in a word, is the gospel *to the age*." The italics are mine. The idea is old, old as Jesus, Paul, John, Savonarola. Luther, and Wesley.

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There is nothing new about it, except that it seems to be necessary to present the fact afresh to each new age. You would think that men would accept this as a matter of course to-day. Most men do. This has been the secret of vital preaching and of the Church's triumph. We do not need a new evangel; to all whom it may concern, let this truth be declared and known. "But an evangelism is a different thing, and we do want that." Why? Drummond gives two reasons that are good even to-day. First, there is "the threatened decline of vital religion under present methods of preaching." That is a fact. The truth does not seem to be reaching men, or reaching men in a way that they can recognize it and appropriate it. It does not fit, as Hallam would say, "into all the folds of our nature." And there is secondly: "The very nature of truth demands from time to time a new evangelism." Tell that in Gath and publish it in the streets of Ashkelon, for the memories of men are short. The term "Doctrinal Standards" is a most unfortunate one. Men tend to emphasize the static idea, the notion of something everlastingly fixed in the word "standard," but Drummond was right

when he likened such a standard to a military banner, like the brightly burnished eagles at the head of the Roman battle column, always in the front of new battles, representing the same august authority, but strong in a fresh and new application of it. 'When the English fought Waterloo, they did not leave their standard at Bannockburn—they brought it up to Quatre Bras.' Are we trying to fight the battles of the twentieth century with our standards still flying over some lonely old battle field of the past?

Men everywhere are desperately in earnest, and believe that God will speak his word afresh in every age. The old Eighteenth-Century Rationalism is dead. No one will be foolish enough to try to revive it any more than we would wish to revert to the theology of St. Augustine, or the hairsplittings of Duns Scotus or Anselm. But there is no virtue in fearing the insistent claims of the mind, or in trying to cocaine reason to silence these claims. "It was no idle dream that likened learning to a lamp," said Froude. "Election, conversion, day of grace, coming to Christ, have been pawed and fingered by unctuous hands. . . . the bloom

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is gone from the flowers. The most solemn of all realities have been degraded into the passwords of technical theology." And Drummond expressed the fervent wish of our hearts for a new statement, a new evangelism, and a new power in the lives and minds of men when he said: "It is from this (referring to Froude) that we are to emancipate ourselves, and—God help us—others."

---

"The Art of Preaching in the Light of Its History," by E. C. Dargan. New York: Doran. 1922.

"The Social Message of the Modern Pulpit," by C. R. Brown. New York: Scribners. 1906.

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"The Changing Church and the Unchanging Christ," by R. H. Coates. New York: Doran. 1925.

CHAPTER IV  
THE RELIGION OF ADVENTURE

All with a touch of nobleness, despite  
Their error, upward tending although weak—  
Like plants in mines which never saw the sun,  
But dream of him, and guess where he may be,  
And do their best to climb and get to him.

—*Robert Browning.*

Life of ages, richly poured,  
Love of God, unspent and free,  
Flow still in the Prophet's word,  
And the people's liberty! . . .

Breathing in the thinker's creed,  
Pulsing in the hero's blood,  
Nerving simplest thought and deed,  
Freshening time with truth and good.

Consecrating art and song,  
Holy book and pilgrim track,  
Hurling floods of tyrant wrong  
From the sacred limits back.

—*Samuel Johnson.*

## CHAPTER IV

### THE RELIGION OF ADVENTURE

FRANCIS GREENWOOD PEABODY, author of "Jesus Christ and the Social Question," contributed an exceedingly interesting and timely article to the New York *Times* some four years ago on "A Religion of Adventure." It may do no harm to recall this challenge. He begins: "One of the most curious and disheartening aspects of modern religion is the decline of the spirit of adventure." Is he right? We confess that this does not seem to us to square with the facts. Adventure, in the sense of a perilous, hazardous, rash, and risky undertaking, religion is not, and in the only department where this applies with anything like a suggestion of even the remotest suitability, missions, there is not the slightest trace of speculation—at least not at present, and it is with the present we are dealing. Adventure in the broader sense, the lure of achievement, the spell of the crusade, these, we think, are everywhere in evidence. The legend "Safety First" has rarely or never been on a Christian church. The

maxim "Go Slow" may occasionally be opportune on the walls of Jerusalem chambers, ministerial associations, theological seminaries, and on streets where there are infirmaries and institutes for the blind, but never at the entrance to congregational meetings. We may be ecclesiastically reticent or theologically bashful, but fearful—never!

What we ask is not "safety from risks, but safety among them." We seek a heaven of achievement here, and we welcome any seer who can lead us up to some vantage point and, "leaning over the parapet of the world," show us our inheritance. We agree with Professor Peabody that "the call of Jesus was not to security, but to sacrifice." He who saves his life loses it.

President Eliot, writing in the *Atlantic Monthly* concerning a presidential campaign, said: "These issues are moral issues." At bottom everything that counts is a moral issue. The critical issue is not the precise phrasing of leagues, covenants, mandates, and sanctions, but with the moral attitudes of men toward the tragic needs of the world.

No man can pray "Thy kingdom come"



without knowing the needs of that kingdom; and, knowing the needs, everyone must, in some way or other, be an adventurer and a crusader.

The men of the East may watch the stars,  
And signs and seasons mark;  
But the men signed with the cross of Christ  
Go gaily in the dark.

These were the heroes named in the famous honor roll of the book of Hebrews, whose achievements were prefaced with "By faith." "*Ut migraturus habita*," said the ancient saint—Live as on a journey. The prayer, "Thy kingdom come," is not so much that it shall come to us as that we shall go to it. Only that man can command the confidence and respect of others "who is lifted up into magnanimity and compassion, and makes the great adventure, to serve and to save."

The symbol of Christianity, observed Lawrence Housman, with true insight, is not one cross, but three crosses—divine love in the midst of sinful men. Decline of adventure in the face of that challenge!

Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,  
But to be young was very heaven!

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CHAPTER V  
AMBASSADORS OF GOD

I think that life is not too long,  
And therefore I determine  
That many people read a song  
Who will not read a sermon.

—*Praed.*

Progress is

The law of life: man is not man as yet.  
Nor shall I deem his object served, his end  
Attained, his genuine strength put fairly forth,  
While only here and there a star dispels  
The darkness, here and there a towering mind  
O'erlooks its prostrate fellows: when the host  
Is out at once to the despair of night,  
When all mankind alike is perfected,  
Equal in full-blown powers—then, nor till then,  
I say, begins man's general infancy.

## CHAPTER V

### AMBASSADORS OF GOD

It has sometimes been said that preaching—that is, good preaching—is steadily on the decline. On the contrary, I think that, if any one will take the pains to look, he will find preaching, and fairly good preaching too, pretty much on the increase. Why, we are fairly smothered with it! The old-time dime novel has graduated into the two-dollar class and preaches at your head like a parson. Much of the so-called poetry of the day is nothing but an infinite nightmare of platitudes set to rhyme. It seems impossible for one to sit down and write a book on economics, politics, business, the Peace Conference, the mandatory of Yap, or even on recreation, without preaching. It is becoming our national pastime. Everyone seems to be going somewhere, with a soap box under his arm, to attack or defend or moralize on something.

In an article on Donne's sermons Clutton-Brock has this to say about preachers and preaching: "We make it a reproach against

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writers when they preach, not merely because preaching is out of place except in sermons, but because it is disagreeable. We do not like a man who preaches, in the pulpit or out of it; for in the process he ceases to be human—men are not born to preach to one another—he loses the good faith of the artist, he tells us not what he has to say, but what he thinks we ought to hear. The convention of sermons changes, but it is never a good one; it is always a giant's robe, awkwardly worn by men as dwarfish as the rest of us. When he enters the pulpit the priest must pretend to be a prophet, however humble he may be by nature. That pretense makes him speak with alien jaws, louder than his wont, with a solemnity not his and a conviction he has not earned." I fancy Clutton-Brock and we are not so far apart as might be imagined. Where the artist and the creator in the preacher is not lost among the paleolithic remains of old borrowed masters; where the passion and fire are not carried from the altars of others; where there is freshness and spontaneity and the tone of authority; where the preacher not only "holds the mirror up to nature," but takes human nature as it is and

holds it up before the exalted image of what it ought to be and can be—where we have this, preaching is vital. It is but another form of that art which speaks through the canvas, the marble, or the musical instrument. It is real poetry in that it touches the universal in each of us. Preaching is not vaporous solemnity. It is the artist, the creator in man reaching out to touch the infinity in other men, and as such it will never lose its popularity, at least not so long as men are capable of being improved.

The Lyman Beecher Lectures on Preaching, "Preaching and Paganism," have this as their dominant idea: To speak in a tone of authority, the preacher must know beyond the shadow of a doubt the ideas of the age which are shaping events. He must be able to distinguish between those elements in present-day thinking which are Christian, and therefore to be conserved and fostered, and those which are pagan and to be battled against. The author, Dr. Albert Parker Fitch, pleads for a transcendent and personal God, and for fresh insistence upon the necessity of interpreting life in all its forms, according to the proposals of Jesus.

Dr. S. Parkes Cadman, one of the greatest

of living preachers, reënforces the same truth in "Ambassadors of God." Dr. Cadman has produced a beautiful apologia for the Christian ministry. If young men and old have not been gripped with the idea that their work is a man's job, they should lose no time in reading this book. After presenting the scriptural basis for preaching, and going behind the minds of some of the master preachers of Christendom, he dives into the problem of those cross-currents in present-day thought and life which affect preaching. An "unbiased and instructed pulpit conscience has to be enlisted" to meet the demand for a sound reason for the faith within us, for an actual application of the ethics of Jesus to the whole life around us, for a modern and liberal interpretation of the meaning and message of the Scriptures, and for a knowledge of intellectual and social currents which are to-day re-shaping society. There must be a reading ministry, saturated with the best thought of every age. There must be a ministry of higher ideals. "I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple."

There must also be a ministry of adventure.



"We are not in the midst of a religious revival . . . but we have plunged over our heads into a sea of religious and spiritual curiosity." One of the indications of the new awakening is the demand everywhere for works which will interpret the old theological positions in the light and spirit of the times. Old manna tends to mold. It must fall fresh every day to be vital and sustaining. The world moves, a movement not like that of the spinning dervish who seems to make progress by standing in the same place, by actually moving out, up, on, or any other word you may care to use that will indicate development. We do not talk about infallibilities to-day. Science has taught us to be cautious. "The only organ of infallibility that Christ promised his followers was the living spirit of truth." Victory then will come, not by hiding behind "theological masonry," but by taking our stand on some premise which we have actually worked out in the crucible of our own experience, and which we are prepared "to defend with the last ounce of our strength." "There would then appear in our pulpits," said Milton, the blind seer, looking into the future, "other visages, other

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gestures, and stuff otherwise wrought, than we now sit under, oftentimes to as great a trial of our patience as any other that they could preach to us."

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"Ambassadors of God," by S. Parkes Cadman. New York: Macmillan. 1921.

"Preaching and Paganism," by A. P. Fitch. Yale University Press. 1920.

"The Ministry as a Life Work," by R. L. Webb. New York: Macmillan. 1922.

CHAPTER VI  
SAY IT WITH WORDS

4

We are in pain to make them scholars, but not men! To talk, rather than to know which is true canting.—*William Penn.*

I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord.—*Numbers 20: 28.*

Common words perhaps;  
The ministers in church might say the same;  
But *he*, he made the Church with what he spoke—  
The difference was the miracle.

—“*Aurora Leigh*,” *E. B. Browning.*

Less judgment than Wit, is *more Salt than Ballast.*  
Yet it must be confessed, that Wit gives an *Edge*  
To Sense, and recommends it extremely.  
Where judgment has Wit to express it,  
There's the *best* Orator.

—*William Penn.*

## CHAPTER VI

### SAY IT WITH WORDS

THERE is a beautiful passage in George Eliot's "Scenes from Clerical Life" which comes to mind:

Ideas are often poor ghosts. Our sun-filled eyes cannot discern them; they pass athwart us in vapour, and cannot make themselves felt. But sometimes they are made flesh; they breathe upon us with warm breath; they touch us with soft responsive hands; they look at us with sad sincere eyes, and speak to us in appealing tones. They are clothed in a human soul, with all its conflicts, its faith, and its love. Then their presence is power; then they shake us like a passion, and we draw after them with gentle compulsion, as flame is drawn to flame.

Every succeeding age seems to bring its own peculiar innovation. It reminds us of that bright urchin's dramatic interest in the repeated lapses from grace of the Israelites recorded in Judges, where the narrative repeats over and over again at regular intervals: "They did evil in the sight of the Lord." The boy piped up excitedly, "Drat 'em! They're at it again!" Classicism, Romanticism, Pietism, Pelmanism, Cubism, Free Verse-ism, one new fashion

follows another in rapid succession. And what shall we say is the last cry to-day? Is it the décolleté attire, black fox furs in August, and nudity in November? Is it the craze for self-analysis, Freudianism gone mad? Is it the exotic in life and literature?

Or is it Egoism? A certain amount of this is a good, even necessary thing. Can one recall Amos, Milton, Bunyan, Luther, Shelley, Livingstone, Lincoln, and a host of others, without thinking of an exalted egoism? Men who know and know that they know, and with a consciousness of tremendous resources of power, must act. We will reverently make way for these Super Egoists. They will ever give point to the moral and adorn the tale. We are thinking now, however, of the plain everyday variety of egoist in our midst. There are nations of them who demand their place in the sun. There are religious orders of them, political parties heavy with them, schools that breed them like spawn in the sun. The whole proletariat is rushing into politics and into print. Self-effacement, gracious and condescending personal obliteration, is not known among us moderns. The slightest appearance

of a breaking-down of the bump of self-esteem would shake the world with dread concern. But fear not, we are in no immediate danger.

The surest sign of this egolatry malaria is the fervent desire among all men for self-expression. Whether there is anything worth while expressing never seems to bother us. There must be a free and unrestricted scope for our "creative impulse."

Now this mania has adorned itself with habiliments of subtle disguise. Sinai speaks and the proletariat utter their manifesto. We can isolate this phenomenon and dissect it and analyze it, but what about those legends peeping from gay shop windows, calling from billboards, beckoning from the pages of the daily press, and echoed by every ratepayer? "Say It with Flowers." "Say It with Candy." "Say It with music." The question I want to ask is, "Why not say it with words?" There never was a time when we needed more to speak the truth without flowers or furbelows or jazz or conversational lozenges. Elihu in Job was right in his insistence when he said: "And I said, 'I will also declare my opinion.'" The author of the Apocalypse also felt this demand

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for strong, clear, plain speaking when he said, giving the reason for his breaking silence, "And I heard a voice from heaven saying Write . . ." Utterance, like the creative impulse, is natural; but when it finally exhibits itself there ought to be an inevitable unmistakableness about it that permits of no doubt.

The most celebrated speakers of words are those who vie with the scientist in accuracy, with the poet in beauty, and with the prophet in power. They are liberal without being radical, and conservative enough to know and value and retain the best of the past. They speak with words, words that are clean-cut, simple, strong, full of meaning and power; words that can smile like sunshine after rain, or words that can smite upon the ear like thunder; words full of felicity and subtle sweetness, or words bitter as vitriol and smarting with the salt of tears. Recall for a moment such princes of the Church as John Wesley, John Knox, Horatio Bonar, Bishop Lightfoot, Cardinal Newman, Dr. Dale, Professor Drummond, Hugh Price Hughes, John Henry Jowett, John Hutton, Harry Emerson Fosdick, Lynn Harold Hough, Richard Roberts, Trevor Davies, and many



more. Here is a small army of men who have moved their own country and the world; who held the lamp of truth so high none could stumble, who held the pitcher so low all might drink. They are men whose words, like weapons, were "whetted to keenness when war was in the air," and those words shifted "the level of human thought and opened a new era for mankind." Can we not with reverence amend the text to read, "The word of the Lord came unto me saying, The time has come to say it with words"?

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"The Preacher and His Sermon," by J. Patterson Smyth. New York: Doran. 1922.

"The Preacher and the People," by F. J. McConnell. New York: Abingdon. 1922.

"The Christian Preacher," by E. A. Garvie. London: Clarke. 1920.

"In a Day of Social Rebuilding," by Henry Sloan Coffin. Yale University Press. 1918.



**CHAPTER VII**  
**THE ARISTOCRACY OF BRAINS**

In pleading for the proclamation of the primary doctrines of our Church, I am so far from asking for a return to the kind of sermon which consisted of a series of faint glimpses of obvious truths which have been repeated a thousand times. Such preaching would empty our churches. Our sermons must gather into themselves the treasures of knowledge which recent years have revealed. They must strike the deeper chords of the heart and reach the highest ranges of intellectual life, and being full of self-emphasizing truth, have a quality which will make them perennially fresh. —*Rev. S. D. Chown, D.D., LL.D., in his Quadrennial Address as General Superintendent of the Methodist Church of Canada.*

## CHAPTER VII

### THE ARISTOCRACY OF BRAINS

PRESIDENT HOPKINS of Dartmouth College leaped into notoriety two or three years ago by declaring that college opportunities should be reserved for the aristocracy of brains. In view of the overcrowding of our universities, and the silly subterfuges frequently employed to meet the emergency, Dr. Hopkins's plea for the admission of only those intellectually alert and eager ought to occasion little surprise, a casual lifting of an eyebrow here and there, but nothing more. The question will then present itself, How are you going to ascertain the intellectually eager? Brains do not belong to certain families, or hail exclusively from certain zones or "spheres of influence." Some say that brains grow under red hair, and behind grey eyes and a prominent nose. Who is there but has not seen brilliant men defy every law of beauty, and outrage every canon of the honorable science of mind and character reading, and put to abysmal scorn every infallibility of the phrenological chart?

However, the world does belong to the aristocracy of brains, irrespective of outward appearances and street addresses. And the statistics collected by the war experts, and gathered elsewhere by psychologists, would seem to show that this particular aristocracy need fear no immediate overcrowding.

How may one recognize a member of the aristocracy of brains? By what token or grip or password does he become known? And how may one hope to obtain election into that charmed fellowship of master minds?

Dr. S. D. Chown in his Quadrennial Address issued a challenge for alert minds, minds keenly and constantly aware, with a pulsating sense of immediateness about them: This is the first point in my thesis. The aristocrat of brains will be distinguished by *le devoir présent*, that urgency which impels men to grasp the actual with naked hands, that compelling sense of immediateness which disdains a prodigal expenditure of time and energy upon anything less than the highest and best. "True greatness consists solely in seeing everything past, future, or afar, in terms of the Here and Now, or in the power of 'presentification.'" (Hall.)

In the second place, given an alert mind, eager to be about its business, chafing to fling itself upon the enigmas of life and thought, the true aristocrat possesses something of detachment. H. G. Wells, speaking of the service of scientists to humanity, says:

In their field they think and work with an intensity, patience, thoroughness, and faithfulness . . . which puts their work out of all comparison with any other human activity. . . In these particular directions the human mind has achieved a new and higher quality of attitude and gesture, a veracity, a self-detachment.

For the present let these two characteristics of a member of the aristocracy of brains suffice—enthusiasm and detachment. The secret of the former is vision, seeing a thing so clearly, so completely, that its meaning burns into the mind like a live coal. Then the teacher becomes a kindler of minds, the physician a healer of spirits, and the minister a savior of the whole man, devising ways of preserving him in all the symmetrical, full-orbed glory of a living, thinking, aspiring, social being. An English monarch stirred Britain into unexampled activity by crying out to his subjects, "Wake up, England!" Let any man—no matter how inferior his mental equipment may

be—see the need and feel the need, and you have a man at his best. Let the Church but present its members with a supreme challenge, a positive, permanent passion, and you will find rough, awkward “gobs” dressing the ranks, steady and ready, dignified with a sense of the urgency and importance of the challenge, and of their own importance in the plan.

Without this and we are like John Donne at prayer: “I throw myself down in my chamber and call in and invite God and his angels thither, and when they are there I neglect God and his angels for the noise of a fly. . . . Sometimes I think I forgot what I was about, but when I began to forget it I cannot tell.”

But many who are able to qualify on the score of energy, eagerness, and enthusiasm, frequently, as Santayana says, become so pre-occupied with mere vitality that they are in danger of falling prey to anæmia. In America we play the game of “pepping it up” so violently that even our thinking is out of breath and we haven’t the desire to pause and discover the eternal and substantial. The only light from all this fervor seems to be, to quote Santayana again, that “in floundering around



(the man of this age) has gained a sense of possible depths in all directions."

Therefore let us have the crown of detachment. Every idea of deity must have this quality—"a Lord high and lifted up," one not obsessed with the hectic hurry of fools. Our thinking to-day lacks this perfect flower of contemplation. We are too eager to jitney along crowded highways in sweaty swarms, gulping dust and inhaling stale gas. Our literature and orations and sermons and conversations lack poise and restfulness and content.

How shall we acquire this supreme decoration of the aristocracy of brains? Just as we went to the master minds of the world to kindle our enthusiasms; just as we were led to the cloud-capped heights and were taught to hear the heaven-borne messages, and to see the beckoning prospects, so we shall return to them again. Only in the meditations, confessions, and lives of the master minds of our own day and the past; only in the records of nations and of men, the accumulated spiritual treasures of the ages; only by knowing these and loving them, by going down beside them and dipping

into them, can a man feel the force of that tide which, while it will bear him far, will also raise him up into the heights and spaces of the heavens. In that vantage point, he may see the ages going and coming, may learn to place things in their right order, not only of time, but of value, may come to say "God's in his heaven," and "God also walks with his people in the gardens of the world."

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"The Prophetic Ministry for To-Day," by C. D. Williams. New York: Macmillan. 1921.

"That the Ministry Be Not Blamed," by J. R. Hutton. London: Hodder and Stoughton. 1921.

"What Can Literature Do for Me?" by C. A. Smith. New York: Doubleday. 1913.

"A Map of the Knowledge of the 'World,'" by S. Morse. London: Arnold. 1925.

"The Outline of History," by H. G. Wells. London: Macmillan. 1926.

CHAPTER VIII

THAT THE MINISTRY BE NOT BLAMED

You can buy colors on the Rialto,  
But drawing only comes by labor.

—*Tintoretto.*

Blessed influence of one true, loving soul on another! Ideals are often poor ghosts; our sun-filled eyes cannot discern them; they pass athwart us in their vapour, and cannot make themselves felt. But sometimes they are made flesh; they breathe upon us with warm breath. They touch us with soft responsive hands, they look at us with sad, sincere eyes, and speak to us in appealing tones; they are clothed in a living soul, with all its conflict, its faith, and its love. Then their presence is a power, then they shake us like a passion, and we are drawn after them with gentle compulsion, as flame is drawn unto flame.—  
*George Eliot.*

## CHAPTER VIII

### THAT THE MINISTRY BE NOT BLAMED

JOHN SPARGO'S article in an American journal some time ago, on "The Futility of Preaching," aroused a storm of protest, and not a little real searching into the facts of the case, to see whether these things were really so. One of the best answers to the whole question as to the importance of the ministry is to be found in "That the Ministry Be Not Blamed," by Dr. J. A. Hutton, author of "The Proposal of Jesus," etc., and editor of *The British Weekly*.

Spargo affirmed that the pulpit was the weak spot in the religious life of the world, its Achilles tendon so to speak. It may be true that the judgment of some preachers on questions of public importance is lightly esteemed. They are respected as men, but they are little consulted. At the same time it is true that the ministry of the Christian Church supplies a tremendous dynamic of progress; that it creates an atmosphere in which life may flourish, and in which values may be judged in their true

light. It may be well to quote Milton's "The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed," but there are hundreds of ministers who take the feeding of their flocks very seriously.

After all, it comes back to the man himself. The small man will permit himself to be carried away by the appeal for snappy talks and all the flamboyant buffoonery we see in so many Churches. He will let himself be beguiled into thinking that the pulpit is his by right, to parade a cheap brand of intelligence. He may try so hard to be up-to-the-minute that he is out of all connection with the progressive and historical tendencies of the past, and as at home in the present as a man just arrived from Mars. This is the favorite method employed to disguise laziness by many ministers. They frequently cover their ignorance by weekly offering of high explosives. The people may be impressed by the noise and a little perturbed by the smoke, but when it all quiets down nothing permanent has been accomplished. It sometimes acts like mustard gas in that, while it may cause copious tears and momentary unrest and annoyance, still it carries no change of conviction.

If the ministry becomes shallow here and there, the people must share some of the blame. They saddle their ministers and bridle them, and ride them to a three-ring circus. They must preach (the Bible of course!) and call, arriving early and staying late, raise funds, build churches and parsonages, and referee church fights, and, and—but why enumerate them? Where does he get time to read and build up his inner spiritual and mental life? No young man need worry about the ministry not being a man's job. A man to be a success in the ministry to-day, if he lived up to the standard of some, would need the hundred sleepless eyes of Argus and the hundred untiring arms of Briareus!

Our present system is splendidly adapted to produce illiteracy and superficiality. We must not tolerate it longer. Our ministry must be a leadership in name as well as in deed. They complain that they can't afford to buy books. They complain that they can't afford the time to read them if they do buy them. No man ever lived but could get books and get at them if he was determined to do so. A ministry that will inflict this sophistry upon the people must

be prepared to see "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin," written upon the walls of what ought to have been his study, and may be his morgue. Cheaper books, and discounts, and gifts will not take the place of a burning passion for scholarship. "Gentlemen," said an old teacher to his class, "you must read, and read, and read to be ready."

The people must coöperate to make the pulpit more attractive; they must give back the pulpit its old respect, and something of its old leisure. The ministry must make the pulpit attractive by once again adorning it with its chief glory, spiritual and intellectual leadership. And yet the greatest disintegrating force which acts upon our congregation to-day is the unwillingness to listen to real double-barreled sermons, and to look truth in the face. The demand for these modern sermonic conversational candies, something that will please everybody, is a disgrace. No man worthy the name will go into a job where he will be intimidated if he tries to speak out his mind, and where the policy of the high-priced pews dictates the tone of the prophecy.

What interested me mightily upon picking



up Dr. Hutton's book was this sentence: "There is one quality which I can claim. It is that I am not what is called 'a born preacher.'" He, moreover, glories in the fact, even calls it an advantage. The trouble with so many teachers is that they got their mathematics, or languages, or literature too easily, and never could appreciate the difficulties of the pupil to whom these things had horns and tails and spat fire from their nostrils! Dr. Hutton offers no tips for preaching, but he does, from first to last, preach the gospel of work. Given a passion to preach, given a determination to pay the price in real sweaty work, and that exclusive genie, Success, will ultimately be bottled. Da Vinci left the face of the central figure in the picture of the Last Supper until, after years of pencil drawings and experiment, he found what he wanted, what was, for him, the inevitable face of Jesus.

Another sound bit of advice is that ministers should not waste their fire on questions with which people are not concerned. Preaching ought to bear the stamp of necessity, of relevance, or else be a nuisance. And then this great contributor to sermonic literature in our

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day gives these suggestions. We must speak to men of God and "there is one solving word for God: it is Christ." Again, a man must have a message. Sermons with content!

While I see day succeed the deepest night—  
How can I speak but as I know—my speech  
Must be, through the darkness,  
It will end:  
The light that did burn, will burn!

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"That the Ministry Be Not Blamed," by J. A. Hutton.  
London: Hodder and Stoughton. 1921.

"The Hebrew Prophet and the Modern Preacher," by  
H. J. Pickett. London: Holborn. 1921.

CHAPTER IX  
THE DYNAMICS OF PROGRESS

I must outlive a thing ere know it dead;  
When I outlive the faith there is a sun,  
When I lie, ashes to the very soul—  
Someone, not I, must wail above the heap.  
—*Robert Browning.*

He fought his doubts and gathered strength,  
He would not make his judgment blind,  
He faced the spectres of the mind  
And laid them: Thus he came at length

To find a stronger faith his own,  
And power was with him in the night,  
Which makes the darkness and the light,  
And dwells not in the light alone,

But in the darkness and the cloud,  
As over Sinai's peaks of old,  
While Israel made their gods of gold,  
Although the trumpet blew so loud.

—*Lord Tennyson.*

## CHAPTER IX

### THE DYNAMICS OF PROGRESS

ONE of the most effective answers to Mr. John Spargo's article, "The Futility of Preaching," was made by Dr. Lyman Abbott in a New York daily paper. Mr. Spargo, or any other reasonable man, cannot legitimately condemn all preaching as futile. As Dr. Abbott points out, some preaching is undoubtedly futile and even worse. There is the type which tries to say too much, which lectures and harangues on "The Shantung Question," "The Mandatory of Yap," etc. This well-known brand feels competent to lecture at the stroke of the bell on anything, from "Morals To Be Drawn from the Latest Immoralities" to, say, "Who Killed Cock Robin?" Then there is the other type which is not ambitious enough, and that thinks it a scandal to proclaim anything more recent than Fletcher's "Checks." Dr. Abbott says in the *Outlook*:

History has conclusively demonstrated the utility of preaching. It was from the preaching friars that English cities got their first impulse

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toward sanitary and ethical reform. It was the preaching of John Wesley and George Whitefield which inspired the poorer classes of England with moral power, and saved the English people from the threatened tragedy of the French Revolution.

It is very doubtful, to my mind, whether all the preaching that will be done in America during the next twelve months, let us say, will add as much well being to America as the work of one honest, efficient farmer, or as that of a humble school-teacher in some "little red schoolhouse."

There is not the slightest doubt in our mind but that efficient preaching will do a very great deal to inspire that farmer and that school-teacher with the passion for efficiency, and fire them with a zeal for the things which are worth while. The preacher is concerned, not with programs, but with dynamics. "The elements of power in the preacher are the same and unchanging from age to age." The moral and mental needs of men have not changed, and the power to meet those needs has not failed. Henry Ward Beecher is quoted as having said that the message of the Christian pulpit will be superseded when there is—

1. A better idea of God than a dying Saviour.
2. A better ideal of manhood than is Christ or Paul.

3. A better philanthropy than "The field is the world," and "He is the chief who is the servant of all."

Any church or pulpit that can hold up these ideals, and that can supply the impulse implied in them, will overcome the world, whether he be Romanist, Protestant, orthodox, or heterodox.

But is this all that is necessary for powerful preaching? Fellowship with God and fellowship with men are paramount in the preacher's qualifications, but it is just the implications of that word "qualifications" that we do not begin to comprehend. Where shall fellowship with men cease or where shall it begin? "Preaching is interpreting the living God by one who has realized God's presence in nature, in human experience, and in the Bible, because he has realized that presence in his own soul." May we not say that the power of preaching is gained by contact with the currents of life? Where else? The cultured Wesley or Phillips Brooks and the self-trained Dwight L. Moody, it makes no difference, "if he has fire in himself and if he has learned how to communicate that fire to others, he will never be without power."

When Jesus commanded his followers to search the Scriptures he simply told them to master the best books, and all prophets of a later day have proclaimed the same message. Paul considered the disciples of Berea "far nobler than the disciples of Thessalonica, because they did not take the sermon for granted, but looked into their books," to see whether these things really were so. There is a fellowship with those "master minds" which no one desiring power may lightly set aside. If Jesus came to look at your church, he would pay little attention to the architecture, but he would examine very closely the minister's library. Here is the inner room where the Father who seeth in secret meets his servant. A congregation may make one of the most monumental contributions to the Church and the Church's cause by giving their minister books of power, dynamic books. A minister's study unadorned by the freshest flowers of human thought, and unlit by the radiance of new truth, can mean nothing but a place of atrophy, defeat, and sorrow. People listen spellbound to crusaders, pioneers, discoverers, men and women who have worked their way to new truth. They



will also listen gladly to the preacher who comes laden with treasure, from freshly foraging in the wide fields of truth and beauty.

The great Alexander Whyte, of Edinburgh, whose church was thronged by university men, said: "If I am to have some time to prepare myself finally before I die, I know the great masterpieces of salvation that I shall have set on the shelf nearest my bed." Sir W. Robertson Nicoll, speaking of Dr. Whyte, said: "He was a genuine bookman. The last words he wrote for publication were advice about reading. . . . Dr. Whyte would have said that the true lover of books nourished in his reading certain of the higher tendencies of his nature." Such book lovers are all too rare. But they have always been the men of power. They have ever been the men of culture, men who are at ease in any society, and who are at home in any age. In these master spirits of the present and past, God has supremely spoken; in their fellowship lies our power. There can only be life by contact somewhere with life.

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"The Changing Church and the Unchanging Christ," by  
R. H. Coates. New York: Doran. 1926.

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"The Spiritual Interpretation of History," by S. Matthews.  
Harvard University Press. 1920.

"Christian Unity: Its Principles and Possibilities." New  
York: Association Press. 1921.

"Literature and Dogma," by Matthew Arnold.

"The Religion and Theology of Paul," by William Morgan.  
Edinburgh: T. & T. Clarke. 1917.

CHAPTER X  
CONCERNING OUR SLOVENLY  
THINKING

6

So may the truth be flashed out by one blow,  
And Guido see, one instant and be saved.  
Else I avert my face, nor follow him  
Into that sad obscure sequestered state  
Where God unmakes but to remake the soul  
He else made first in vain; which must not be.

—*Robert Browning.*

O world invisible, we view thee,  
O world intangible, we touch thee,  
O world unknowable, we know thee,  
Inapprehensible, we clutch thee.

—*Francis Thompson.*

Yes I fling my soul on high with new endeavor,  
As I ride the world below with a joyful mind.

*I shall start a heron soon*

*In the marsh below the moon—*

*A wondrous silver heron its inner darkness fledges!*

I hear forever

The fens and the sedges.

The pledge is still the same—for all disastrous  
pledges,

All hopes resigned!

My soul still flies above me for the quarry it shall  
find!

—*William Rose Benét.*

## CHAPTER X

### CONCERNING OUR SLOVENLY THINKING

"To write well," said Buffon, "is at once to think well, to feel rightly, and to render properly; it is to have at the same time mind, soul, and taste." Let a man choose a theme and decide to set in order his ideas, either in speech or writing, and he will sooner or later become aware of the age-old problem with which poets and philosophers have always been concerned. Without at first realizing it he will have become a citizen of that vast commonwealth of "the best minds," whose desire it has been to give a truth, or an imaginative experience, their most beautiful and inevitable utterance.

The first concern of the author and orator will be to understand why the utterances of their predecessors have possessed significance, why the world will not willingly allow these ideas to disappear. The creative artist of any sort must first of all have something to say that is important for itself, and memorable for the manner in which it is expressed. Thus it

happens that the world's thinkers are self-taught, just as the style in which they express themselves possesses unbought and unsought grace and distinction.

President Lowell frequently maintained that the best English in the world was spoken at Harvard. No one would disagree with the venerable doctor, provided he himself was allowed to do the speaking of the university. The extreme egoism of the claim, however, is its own best refutation. Personally, we prefer to take our stand with Professor Lounsberry, who asserted that slovenly talk is one of the chief dangers to the language. He was not thinking of the rules of grammar and syntax. I once knew a professor who admonished his class: "A preposition is a bad word to end a sentence with." It can be rightly inferred that the class howled! Some of the greatest masters of prose have heartlessly split their infinitives, ended paragraphs with weak words, and committed other literary unpardonables. But the point Dr. Lounsberry desired to make was, that the loss of leisurely talk in the exquisite manner of the older days was due to "the lazy, unintelligible, syncopated" thinking of our generation.

The fault is not due to our lack of leisure. It is rather due to the fact that we have achieved leisure faster than we have learned how to use it. There is nothing which is a greater menace to culture than this. We find ourselves racing, our pace set by time-clocks, and when our eight-hour working day is ended our spirits have gone to pieces. The only cure for it is the recipe known to every sage since the world began—work, companionship, and then somewhere a mountain side apart and lone, somewhere a little island of rest. The hardest, as it is the greatest, human achievement is, in the words of a great friend, “To keep the soul on top.”

People are not born to sit down, take a pen in hand, reach for a writing pad, and write mellifluous prose, any more than they are born victors. With diligence one may learn to write or speak correctly, but many with diligence become insufferable bores. Fifteen minutes a day with a five-foot bookshelf will work wonders with bashful brains, and we mean this as no slight, for did not Ben Jonson and Bacon, Macaulay and Anatole France, pack the crevices of their speech with the golden utter-

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ances of others? The main point about it all, however, the chief thing to be remembered, is that slovenly writing and slovenly talking are only possible when there is slovenly thinking. Distinction is born of pains.

And so we return to where we set out. The artist, the architect, the author, the speaker will look well and with reverence to the ancient landmarks. Current fashions have their day, journalistic triumphs flash, flicker, and fade, but the truths with which Socrates, Goethe, Dante, Shakespeare, Lincoln, and others shook the world abide forever. In our rage for ideas we are apt to overlook these Himalayan peaks, which stand above the passing show.

To write, or speak, at the pinnacle of one's best, is to write and speak for the minority, but this small select group is the one that counts most. Not only is this the only way to preserve one's style, but it is also the only way to save one's soul.

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One cannot recommend too highly "The World's Classics," Oxford University Press, and "Everyman's Library," published by J. M. Dent and Sons, containing the great classics of all time, while "The Home University Library" is an admirable guide in the general field of knowledge. The publishers will gladly send complete lists of these upon request.



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CHAPTER XI  
LITERATURE AS REVELATION

Man is imprisoned in the eternal present; and what we call a man's religion is, to a great extent, the thing that offers him a secret and permanent means of escape from the prison; a breaking of the prison walls which leaves him standing, of course, still in the present, but in a present so enlarged and enfranchised that it is become, not a prison but a free world.—*Professor Gilbert Murray.*

Day and night I wander widely through the wilderness of thought,  
Catching dainty things of fancy most reluctant to be caught,  
Shining tangles leading nowhere persistently unravel,  
Tread strange paths of meditation very intricate travel.

Gleaning bits of quaint desire tempt my steps beyond the descent,  
I confound old solid glory with publicity too recent.  
But my one unchanged obsession whereso'er my feet have trod,  
Is a keen, enormous, haunting, never-sated thirst for God.

—*Pamalie Bradford.*

## CHAPTER XI

### LITERATURE AS REVELATION

WE are so accustomed to associate the idea of revelation with the literature of the Scriptures that we need to be reminded now and then that revelation began long before the Bible was thought of, before men wrote their first records in clay and baked them into bricks in the sun. To some, the only revelation they can understand or appreciate is the "presence that disturbs me with the joy of elevated thoughts, whose dwelling is the light of setting suns, and the living air and in the mind of man." To others, it comes through human affection and in the "anodyne of constant work." The long line of torchbearers has never been broken. Indeed, now and then, they have straggled far apart, as when the lamps in the temple of learning were made to burn dim, and men lost their way, but God has never ceased to reveal his beauty, truth, and love to this day.

In literature we have the sacred fires still burning upon the altars of our gods, and warm-

ing moments of life that "are too beautiful to be allowed to pass." In it, "the soul of man stands at the door and knocks." But, beautiful and vivid as these master works of literature may be, they are neither instruments of vitality and compelling power, nor forces of inspiration and instruction, until we get at them, reach them, and live them. Of themselves they cannot get to us and cannot compel us, "and if we do not open to them they die." But if we do open them, Æschylus, Plato, Vergil, Dante, the "Little Flowers" of St. Francis, and "Hamlet," they are as gods in their immortality, and like the mythical kings in their opulence.

And as I withdraw for a moment from the Babel of the world, and enter the cool, calm glory of the temple of literature, what do I gain? Listen!

It also gives man an escape from the world about him, an escape from the noisy present into the region of facts which are as they are and not as foolish human beings want them to be: an escape from the commonness of daily happenings into the remote world of high and severely-trained imagination; an escape from mortality in the service of a growing and durable purpose, the progressive discovery of truth. . . . And the religion of democracy? . . . For the cardinal doctrine of that religion is the right of every human soul to

enter, unhindered, except by the limitation of its own powers and desires, into the full spiritual heritage of the race.—*Gilbert Murray.*

There is a curious coincidence between what is revealed and what is desired. That is a trick our idealism plays us; we see the thing we like and desire, and then we deify it and follow it! It is because of man's illimitable curiosity, his exhaustless faculty of mimetic imagination that he is able, not merely to get inside his gods and understand them, but he is able also to enlarge his own life and swing the circumference of his world farther out. As Plato remarked long ago, there are only two things which determine the way we shall take, and the height to which we shall climb, and both are within ourselves, "The road of our longing, and the quality of our soul."

But why does one read at all? For the very same reason that one studies art or science—because one wants very much to get somewhere, and desires to learn of those who may throw some light upon the riddle of existence, and interpret one to one's self. Dr. Murray tells of a young Nonconformist who, criticizing the poetry of the inimitable Keats, applied the test as to whether he had ever saved a soul.

The critic believed that Keats had not and so stood condemned. But, after all, the saving of a soul is no mean achievement; and while the test of the critic was narrow and theological, based on broader lines it is one which ought to stand. What is it to save a soul, if not to entice or compel a soul to rise above itself into an order of a finer symmetry, and behold beauty and truth with an unclouded eye? In this sense Keats himself was a savior, for did he not point the way in those oft-quoted lines:

Beauty is truth, truth beauty—that is all  
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know?

Of all the reasons for creating a love of literature, none to my mind is mightier than this—*literature is revelation*. Books are real heavenly messengers with wings of fire. One can understand why it was that Milton considered the destruction of a book a far more heinous crime than the killing of a man. To slay a man is, of course, to destroy one made in God's image; but to kill a good book is to kill the very essence of a man's thought, "to slay God's image, as it were, in the eye." Man must die when the tale of his years is told; "but a good book is the precious lifeblood of a



master spirit, treasured up for a life beyond life." The best in literature is but revelation—revelation of infinite truth and goodness in the woof and warp of things, revelation of God to man and of man to himself. Literature then is a living thing, for it has a soul. And if you could, with sensitive ear attuned, reverently listen, you might hear these several literatures of the peoples of the world speak out of their "master spirits." The Hebrew would speak of the laws of God and the life of God; the Greek, of symmetry and beauty; the Saxon and Briton, of a passion for freedom and of an inbred nonconformity; and the Russian, of a wistful yearning for the refining culture of suffering.

If revelation were not absolutely necessary to living, one might discount much of this, but no man can find his right place in the world, and attain to usefulness and happiness, without illumination. We profess that in matters of religious belief we need revelation, but in the more obvious matters of life we are equally unaware of the inner meanings of things. How helpless we feel in an art gallery, a machinery exhibit, a museum, large factory, a strange city, or a reference library! But creep up be-

hind two artists discussing a picture, take as a guide a machinist or an educator, and how fascinating everything becomes, how quickly hidden meanings become obvious and interesting! We listen to a reciter rendering the farewell soliloquy of Cardinal Wolsey, but when we hear the great actor, how the lines dazzle with new suggestiveness! We listen to some sublime passage from the Scriptures being stumblingly and stupidly read, all the fire and poetry gone out of it; and then we hear a man who has caught the subtle undertones of the revelation, and how our hearts beat wildly as we wing our flight upward through the stars! Only a Huxley could take a piece of chalk and move an audience of Norwich workingmen, by revealing to them, from his humble little white text, the romantic secrets of the earth's past and the strange, age-old romances of the unmeasured depths of the sea. Yes, though I have the tongue of poets and of angels, and have not that subtle and meaningful revelation of love, I am nothing.

And this leads to a plea for the prophets, for those who are entitled to tell forth because they have something infinitely precious to impart,

not only in guiding us into the road of our longing, but also in enriching the quality of our soul. Sometimes they have uttered wild, sad notes like Mazzini, Shelley, Carlyle, Strindberg, Nietzsche, and John Baptist. Others again have spoken the truth in love, a Jesus or a John, a St. Francis or a Dostoevsky, some have thundered from Sinai, prophets clad in the garments of workingmen, and their homely phrases leaping with fire. Others have with soft music or the harmonies of sweeter words, warm marbles, or canvases alive with feeling, opened up the vastnesses of man's resources and the illimitable expanses of his inheritance. But this thing is true; of all the benefactors of mankind there are none greater than the prophets, revealers of the souls of things, spendthrifts of the open spaces and the mountain tops, executors of the gods lavishing the luxurious merchandise of heaven upon the sons of men.

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CHAPTER XII  
IGNORANCE AND DISCIPLINE

The largest library in disorder is not so useful as a smaller but orderly one; in the same way the greatest amount of knowledge, if it has not been worked out in one's own mind, is of less value than a much smaller amount that has been fully considered. For it is only when a man combines what he knows from all sides, and compares one truth with another, that he completely realizes his own knowledge and gets it into his power. A man can think over only what he knows, therefore he should learn something; but a man knows only what he has pondered.—*Schopenhauer.*

*I have ridden the wind,  
I have ridden the stars,  
I have ridden the force that flies  
With far intent through the firmament  
And each to each allies.  
And everywhere  
That a thought may dare  
To gallop, mine has trod—  
Only to stand at last on the strand  
Where just beyond lies God.*

—*Cale Young Rice.*

## CHAPTER XII

### IGNORANCE AND DISCIPLINE

A YEAR or so ago two lectures were delivered at Oxford University, which, taken together, provoke a good deal of thinking. One was the Romanes lecture by John Burnet entitled "Ignorance," the other was Professor Gordon's inaugural lecture, "The Discipline of Letters." Both books are much concerned with an evil into which each in turn falls—namely, the present zeal for the popularization of knowledge. Was it not said aforetime, that the desire of discipline was the beginning of wisdom? But into what a sorry mess are we fallen!

Professor Burnet is visibly shocked. "The young men of to-day are absolutely and relatively more ignorant than those of forty years ago, and, what is worse, they have less curiosity and intellectual independence." All this in spite of forums, Chatauquas, summer courses, raised entrance requirements, night schools, and the army of fastidiously-attired young men with well-larded hair, studying the morn-

ing papers, row upon row, on the way to the office.

Mr. Burnet sees the day not far distant when standards will be lowered all along the line, except perhaps in the physical sciences and in athletics. The cure is an immediate and acute realization of a "sense of sin" and a "sense of ignorance."

Mr. Gordon swells the duet of lamentation over educational short cuts and unbecoming popularity, as being cheap and unscholarly. On the one hand he scores the organized boredom of German universities, and on the other laments that in the English universities "Mercury and Philology are partners for life."

Both men discover the cure to be discipline. The rights of democracy insure to every man the right to speak. This liberty and equality of opportunity may very well become a conceit. No one will deny the right of any man to speak, but let it be *his mind*. Sensational journalism as well as sensational preaching are a present-day menace. If a crowd or a wide circulation were the chief thing, these methods could be justified. Sober thinking, original thinking, reverent thinking have been sacrificed to pew-



packing. Getting down "to the level of the people" means sitting in the mud. These "go-getters" of the gospel have sacrificed tenderness and truth, sincerity and the splendor of the abiding realities, for pompous palaver and bluff. No intelligent man or woman is deceived. The preacher is alone deceived. Plato is still one of the moderns. His words are a stinging rebuke to any man, poet or preacher, who would presume to take up the time of others with his trivial boasts and conceits and his "hash of helloquence." Plato says that when undisciplined, wordy ignorance takes possession of a man,

When (words) have emptied and swept clean the soul of him who is now in their power, and is being initiated by them in great mysteries, the next thing is to bring back to their house insolences and anarchy and waste and impudence, in bright array, having garlands on their heads, with a great company, while they hymn their praises and call them by sweet names: insolence they term breeding, and anarchy liberty, and waste magnificence, and impudence courage.

There is a considerable minority who, like Matthew Arnold's lady, "liked to think" that there were twenty-two geniuses at that time writing in the United States alone! Culture is not learning the alphabet and reading the

newspaper. No education can by any means squeeze a quart into a pint pot. Knowledge is not so simple. On the other hand, there is a sacred minority who believe that Puritanism is the only way out, and so refuse the good for fear of the evil that may sneak in with it. This accounts for the silly attitude of some toward science, new theology, simple social pleasures, and such like. Remove one's thumb from the hole in the dike and the floods may sweep one away!

Clearly the only cure for it all is discipline. We shall never become saints by shouting "Infidel!" at our neighbors. We shall never become wise by closing our eyes to the gulf which may divide our own ignorance and our neighbor's brilliance. We shall never achieve distinction either in character or utterance until we are prepared to recognize the artist's passion for self-discipline and our own supine indolence.

Evangelical Christianity has always been in danger of losing sight of this fact. The salvation of the soul became an individualistic enterprise. Too frequently "salvation" meant a blanket insurance against "the wrath to

come." "Sanctification" likewise became narrow, and how often the ignorant Christian, boasting of sanctification, makes it synonymous with every conceit. It was felt to take the place of all "secular" knowledge and illumination. When the Master said, "For their sakes I sanctify myself," he had in mind a higher knowledge and a profounder discipline than many of his followers imagine, or care to believe.

Ignorance and indifference are the greatest enemies of character and culture. The end of education is not books, but ideas incorporated into life. The end of discipline is not any prideful thing, but the glory of a mind and body upon which one can depend in any stress. The mind aims at the farthest fixed star, and knows that in the long flight all the auxiliary forces of one's being will strain forever toward that goal. The arrow trusts the bow; the song of the leaping cord, when the arrow goes quivering home, becomes the hymn of victory.

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CHAPTER XIII  
OLD WINE IN NEW BOTTLES

Out of the dust a shadow,  
Then, a spark;  
Out of the cloud a silence,  
Then, a lark;  
Out of the heart a rapture,  
Then, a pain;  
Out of the dead, cold ashes,  
Life again.

—*John Bannister Tabb.*

Thou wouldst know what I did while I was there,  
while I was free? I lived, old man! I lived! and  
my life, without these happy days, would have  
been gloomier and darker than thy powerless old  
age!—*Lermonton.*

No utterance has any value as preaching that  
does not lead to inspiration as its end.—*Albert  
Durrant Watson.*

## CHAPTER XIII

### OLD WINE IN NEW BOTTLES

COUNT LEO TOLSTOY, on the last page of the first volume of "War and Peace," puts into the mouth of one of his characters a frantic exclamation which one cannot easily forget. I have no doubt in my own mind that Tolstoy wrote with his tongue in his cheek, thinking all the while what an infinite variety of Rostows there were almost everywhere you look. Count Rostow was a rabid royalist. The breach had not yet occurred between Czar Alexander and Napoleon, and Rostow zealously worshiped in private, and loudly extolled in public, the super-human virtues of the royal allies. Alexander and Napoleon had visited the same town with their numerous suites, and at the Russian officer's mess one of the officers openly criticized the Franco-Russian fraternity, exclaiming that the presence of the French was humiliating. At this Count Rostow flared up and said with all his royalist vehemence: "How dare you criticize the Czar's actions? . . . We are soldiers

and nothing more. We are ordered to die and we die. . . . If once we begin to criticize and judge, there will soon be nothing sacred. We shall end by denying the existence of God—of anything! There is but one thing for us to do—Our Duty—to fight and never think; that is the whole story!”

That was supposed to be about the year 1808 or so. Even a century of enlightenment has not carried all the Rostows away. A profound conviction is not necessarily the natural corollary of profound thinking; it may be the outward and visible sign of a fathomless and abysmal ignorance. But these weird folk are happily absent from the readers of these pages. In other words, they are where our luminous shafts cannot reach them.

One of the amazing phenomena in the religious world at the present moment is the restless passion for restatement and reaffirmation. It is not enough that God once spoke to his prophets in olden times, and that they set in order their ideas regarding their experiences. It is equally important that every succeeding day, in the light of newer truths and larger experiences, should as earnestly correlate and



define them. In a very real sense there is an identical element in the multifarious experiences of all men. Therefore, we need never be afraid of losing the truth, but we must ever be zealously employed, giving truth its inevitable expression in the language of this hour. Truth speaks only in the dialect of the present moment.

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CHAPTER XIV  
ON RELIGIOUS TOLERATION  
8

I will not cease from mental fight,  
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand.  
—*Blake.*

He deemed his task a solemn one,  
And kneeled in sombre garb to pray;  
Made much of symbols, ancient rites,  
Of holy book and sacred day.

I, on the grass beneath the pine—  
A pagan to my finger tips,  
Accounting every flower divine,  
Breathed incense from its petal lips.

And God, in His almighty love,  
Knowing our need, and nothing loath,  
Leaned kindly from his heavens above  
And poured his blessing on us both.  
—*Albert Durrant Watson.*

## CHAPTER XIV

### ON RELIGIOUS TOLERATION

It is a common saying that it does not matter what one thinks so long as one neither says it nor shows it. Once thought germinates an idea it is impossible to conceal it. We commonly hear it said that freedom of utterance must, by the same token, be an inalienable right. So much of our thinking is done for us that we can largely dispense with independent thinking. On the whole it is not generally encouraged, for it leads to disquieting conclusions and equally disturbing practices. If thought becomes too free, a man, if he thinks about theological conclusions, is apt to be branded as a heretic. If he thinks about the problems of state and government, he may possibly be called a traitor. It is best to think with the majority to avoid trouble, for the people are fickle and majorities are cruel. Madame Roland goes to the scaffold to be executed by zealots, who will themselves be slain by other zealots in their turn when other days have come, and she cries before the blade falls, "O

Liberty! what crimes are committed in thy name!"

The story of the rise of toleration is a long and fascinating one. The fight for it began in the sixth century B.C. in Iona, that cradle of science and philosophy. It began with Xenophanes' declaration, "If oxen had hands and the capacities of men, they would make gods in the shape of oxen." He scoffed at the gods of Homer, and held their immorality up to ridicule. Heraclitus before him had said that all things change, and that stability was nowhere found as a principle of life. Why should not ideas change also? Later on Anaxagoras declared that the gods were abstractions and that the sun was a ball of fire. Only the powerful intervention of Pericles saved his life. Protagoras played safe. His utterance is a model for all the cautious. "Concerning the gods, I cannot say that they exist nor yet that they do not exist. There are more reasons than one why we cannot know. There is the obscurity of the subject and there is the brevity of human life."

There is something very modern and needful about Locke's well-known assertion about

truth. So many use epithets for arguments, and fancy that by telling the world a man is a "higher critic," or that he imported his theology from Germany, they have settled the thing finally, conclusively, permanently, and forever. Locke said: "What is true and good in England will be true and good at Rome too, in China or Geneva." It may seem strange, but we are no longer interested in just Anglican, Baptist, or Methodist doctrine. We will always feel proud of the contributions which they have made to thought and to religious experience, but Methodist doctrine for Methodist doctrine's sake, and considered apart from truth for truth's sake, is as dead as the dodo.

It is humiliating to think what gross inhumanities and injustices have been perpetrated in the name of religion. The French clergy justified their persecutions of the Protestants and the infidels by quoting the text, "Compel them to come in." The Scriptural injunction against witches was the cause of centuries of revolting slaughter. The appeal to the Bible and the quotation of texts on the rights of women, duties of slaves, and the well-

unless we recognize the fact that the supremest services rendered to religion have been rendered by men like Jesus and Paul, Luther and Wesley, Schleiermacher and Spinoza, men who frequently had to move outside orthodoxy, because "organized religion" forced them to it. The sad thing about all this is that while we see the truth and feel the force of the argument for toleration, we forget its binding implications whenever any new occasion arises demanding a fresh application of the principle.

Nothing is infallible made by earthly hands and conceived by the human mind. Man is not concerned with infallibility either in books or practice. At best we can but hope to create a coherent view of the world, one of which, the incongruity between theology and science, between the false and the true, gradually tends to disappear. This is one of the reasons why churches are wary of formulating creeds to-day. They grow out of date before the ink is dry. The minimum of belief can never be stated accurately, therefore it can never square with the maximum of truth. The Church that still demands of its neophytes and ordinands subscription to such a statement of belief, must



expect those beliefs to be subscribed to "with a sigh or a smile." It is immoral to follow one method for "secular" truth in the criticism of "secular" literature, and to follow another method for "religious" truth and "sacred" literature. Ecclesiastical excommunication and censorship were not final arguments. The Lord Chancellor of England, who gave his decision that it was not necessary for a clergyman to believe in eternal punishment, prompted the wags of his day to write his epitaph thus: "Toward the close of his earthly career he dismissed hell with costs, and took away from orthodox members of the Church of England their last hope of everlasting damnation."

We are moving ahead. Fourier once said that the time would come in the progressive march of men, when the sea would be turned by man's ingenuity into lemonade, when there would be thirty-seven million poets as great as Homer, thirty-seven million writers as great as Molière, thirty-seven million men of science equal to Newton. I am personally more interested in seeing the time come true when Mill's hope should have been realized, when there would "exist the fullest liberty of professing

and discussing, as a matter of ethical conviction, any doctrine, however immoral it may be considered."

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CHAPTER XV  
RELIGION ON TERMS WITH LIFE

Love is not dead.  
We have cherished it too long,  
We have planted it too deep,  
And we have watered it well.  
The roots and branches spread  
In earth and airy song.  
Love has a word to keep,  
A word to tell.      —*John Drinkwater.*

Grant us the will to fashion as we feel,  
Grant us the strength to labor as we know,  
Grant us the purpose, ribb'd and edg'd with steel,  
To strike the blow.

Knowledge we ask not—knowledge Thou hast lent,  
But, Lord, the will—there lies our bitter need,  
Give us to build above the deep intent  
The deed, the deed.      —*John Drinkwater.*

## CHAPTER XV

### RELIGION ON TERMS WITH LIFE

YOU remember the beautiful Greek legend of Pygmalion, King of Cyprus, who carved a wonderful statue of a woman in purest ivory. Into his work he wrought all his dreams and all his love. One day the thing over which he had toiled with such solitude grew warm under his touch, and lived and loved him in return. All things are possible to him who believes, but all things are easy to him who loves. "Love is revelation in religion," said Henry James, "inspiration in art, motive in morality, and the fullness of religious joy."

Rambling through Ireland's "Enchiridion"  
I alighted on this thought:

A pretty allegory might be made showing how a certain Pygmalion collected together a divine library so beautiful, so perfect, so harmonious in all its parts, that he who made it and gazed upon it was straightway smitten with a passion that made his heart to beat and his cheek to glow; and how presently the library became alive to him, a beneficent thing, full of love and tender thought, as good as she was beautiful, a friend who never failed him; and how they were united in holy wedlock, and lived together and never tired of each

other, until he died. . . . A library, you will perceive, is essentially feminine: it is receptive, it is responsive, **it** is productive. You may lavish upon it—say upon her—as much love as you have in your nature, and she will reward you with fair offspring, sweet and tender babes—ideas, thoughts, memories, and hopes. Who would not love the mother of such children? Who would not be their father?

Are we not now in need of a race of Pygmalsions, of men and women who can and will love something true and beautiful and good with all the intensity of an exalted passion? Social ills will never be solved by detached sociologists, but by lovers of mankind, instinct with the sense of mutual sympathy and mutual understanding. Truth will never be discovered and diffused by cold rationalists, but by real philosophers, the lovers of wisdom. The lover of the lovely is the only poet and the only artist, he who, through gladsome sunshine and the multi-colored splendor of the eventime, joyously pursues as with a butterfly net the elusive word and radiant thought. And the lover of love for love's sake, 'tis he alone who has peopled the earth with life's kindest teachers, with Samaritans and saints. Seeley was right when he said, "No heart is pure that is not passionate; no virtue is safe that is not enthusiastic."

And one with a certainty born of experience said, "We know that we have passed from death *unto* life, because we love."

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CHAPTER XVI  
FOOLS

The idealist said in his heart: "The God of force is dead, or dying." He has been proven the fool that the man of affairs and the militarist always said he was. But the fools of this world—generally after they are gone—have a way of moving men which the wise and practical believers in force have not. . . The battle between the God of love and the God of force endures forever. Fools of the former camp, drowned out and beaten to their knees, in due time will get up again and plant their poor little flag a little farther on. "All men shall be brothers," said the German fool Schiller; so shall the fools say again when the time comes; and again, and again, after every beating.—*John Galsworthy, "First Thoughts on the War."*

## CHAPTER XVI

### FOOLS

OF course dreamers have always been Fools. Columbus was one kind of a Fool, a desperate-minded one, and Garrison dreaming of the unfettered slave, and Garibaldi in exile dreaming of a free Italy, were possibly weak-minded Fools, while the men who dream of brotherhood, real 100 per cent human solidarity, are just plain Fools. It may be their weakness, but it is also to their imperishable glory that they do not feel foolish, and so go right on hoping and working for the time when clean and healthy living shall be the natural inheritance of every one; when the love of truth shall no longer be a convention, but a passionate devotion; when industrial organization "shall be a happy blend of craftsmanship, science, and the satisfaction of human wants"; when the love of love shall outweigh biological heredity, stubborn evolution, diplomacy and leagues and covenants, and the race shall become one in a sense of social sympathy and social responsibility.

The biggest Fool of all was the old-time "man of God." He was indomitably and eternally sealed to his foolishness. He not only saw the Utopia upon the horizon, but he also saw the very woods of Birnam removing to Dunsinane, the elements seemed to league themselves in order that they might prosper his dream. The servant, the practical man, the individual who boasts that a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush, is confronted by the emergency and cries: "What shall we do?" And the Fool answers: "Fear not: for they that be with us are many legions greater than those that be against us." And sometimes these men learn to see, and "behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire."

It would be quite impossible to define all that Galsworthy implies in his use of the term Fool; but in general it stands for the age-old distinction between idealism and a dead Baal, between a Good All-highest, and a fallen angel of lost hope and insolent indifference (let-it-lie-until-it-rots fatalism), between love, truth, and triumphant goodness and sullen hate, ugly selfishness and wolfish intolerance.

The Fool says that his business is to build

bridges. Thomas Nixon Carver expresses the ideal thus:

It may be laid down as a general social law that anything which separates people into sharply distinguishable groups, whether it be a geographical boundary, a racial difference, a difference of religious creeds, or a class distinction, will produce, between the groups thus separated, first, ignorance of one another, then suspicion growing out of that ignorance and suspicion, and finally open warfare whenever a pretext is found; whereas, anything which bridges over these gaps, or brings people together regularly and normally, creates, first, knowledge of one another, then confidence instead of suspicion, then understanding instead of misunderstanding, and finally lasting peace because no difficulty seems large enough to serve as a pretext for war.

The Fool picks up Wells' "Men Like Gods" and reads: "The whole world followed that Teacher of teachers; but no one worshiped him." And the Fool says: "Where there are lies there cannot be freedom, and where there is less than an entire devotion to truth there can be neither happiness, satisfaction, nor abundance of life. There can be no other alternative than a complete test of the proposals of Jesus."

The Fool also picked up Sir Philip Gibbs' novel, "The Middle of the Road," and read: "Stronger! Stronger! Let the truth come right

out and show its bloody face to those who still believe in the glory and splendor of war's adventure, instinctive educated pacifists, believing in the power of the spirit; who therefore hate war, but who know that it's going to happen again unless we can get some sense into the heads of the average man and woman; that the only chance against it is the intensive education of the people toward the international idea." And the Fool agreed!

Perhaps we are beginning to get an idea of what a Fool is. There is always somebody bobbing up and calling somebody else a Fool, and upon examination the Fool is usually anything but an idiot. He has always been the man who when asked for his coat gave whatever else of his scanty raiment he could spare. If you asked him to go one mile, he cheerfully went along two for measure. He invested his money in enterprises he never saw, in foreign relief, missions, world friendship overtures, and a thousand like things. While others were poring over ledgers and reckoning margins above cost, he was getting quiet joy out of the knowledge that he had been a spendthrift. His pockets were empty, his body tired, and

his mind weary, but in his soul he was a millionaire.

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CHAPTER XVII  
THE FAITH OF A LIBERAL

Have you ever noticed, Hilda, how the impossible—how it seems to beckon and cry aloud to one?—*Solness in "The Master Builder," Ibsen.*

Sail forth—steer for the deep waters only,  
Reckless, O soul, exploring, I with thee and thou  
with me,  
For we are bound where mariner has not yet dared  
to go,  
And we will risk the ship, ourselves and all.

O my brave soul!  
O farther, farther sail!  
O daring joy, but safe! Are they not all the seas  
of God?  
O farther, farther, farther sail!

—*Walt Whitman.*

For all the creeds are fake, and all the creeds are  
true;  
And low at the shrines where my brothers bow,  
there will I bow too;  
For no form of a god, and no fashion  
Man has made in his desperate passion  
But is worthy some worship of mine—  
Not too hot with a gross belief,  
Nor yet too cold with pride,  
I will bow down where my brothers bow,  
Humble, but open-eyed! —*Don Marquis.*

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE FAITH OF A LIBERAL

LORD MACAULAY, you remember, makes his South Sea Islander sit on a broken arch of London Bridge and sketch the ruins of St. Paul's. Things equally surprising have happened before; but these are as nothing to the desolation imagined by those who fancy that the foundations of faith are being undermined and destroyed.

There has recently appeared a most challenging book by President Nicholas Murray Butler, entitled "The Faith of a Liberal." Dr. Butler, with his usual force and vividness, states the case for the liberal spirit, and demonstrates how necessary such a spirit is in any nation which desires to become a fit habitation for freemen. He is not deluded by any myopic dream of perfection, for there is too much greed, hate, and ignorance to make any such Utopia immanent. There is in his book a great deal on the constitution, on government generally, the courts, and other matters in which I am not greatly interested, but he gives the best defini-

tion of a liberal I have seen in many a day, and it is worth preserving:

Historically and etymologically the true liberal is a believer in liberty, whether that liberty be intellectual, civil, political, economic, or religious. He resists the artificial or forcible holding in check of any man's effort toward growth and free expression, provided only that that man does not interfere with, or limit, the like activity of any other man. . . . Liberty rather than restraint, construction rather than destruction, progress rather than mere restless change, are seen to be the instruments by which those gains of mankind which we call civilization are steadily strengthened and enriched. Freedom has dangers and temptations of its own. The man who is free to choose will not always choose right; but if he is to be free, he must be given the opportunity to choose wrong. A compulsion to choose right is not only no substitute for liberty, but it is the antithesis to liberty. . . . The true liberal need not be a blind and uncritical optimist, but he cannot be a pessimist. He will read the philosophy of Schopenhauer with profound interest, but will close it without conviction. The true antithesis to liberalism is that many-sided tendency and doctrine which makes for uniformity and for conformity and whose instruments are compulsions and prohibitions. It sometimes takes the form of socialism, sometimes that of communism, and sometimes that of fanatical despotism, in suppressing or confining the activities, the acquisitions, or the expressions of men.

Instead, therefore, of becoming chagrined at any manifestation of the liberal spirit, one ought rather to rejoice, for in it alone is the

hope of man's religious, social, and intellectual existence.

This, too, is the attitude of Dr. Leighton Parks, whose most timely and excellent little book "What Is Modernism?" has been creating much comment. In the preface to his book he loses no time in stating where he stands: "The modernist may be wrong in regard to every question now being discussed, and yet may be the one who understands that the fundamental questions which must be answered are: 'What is God?' 'How do you know there is a God?' 'How do you know that religion is not an illusion?' The modernist is convinced that no external authority can answer these questions in a way that will satisfy the deepest longings of the soul. He believes that men must be shown the eternal foundation on which the soul has always rested—the experience of the soul in touch with reality."

The difficulty is that we lose ourselves in bitter disputations about particulars, and allow the eternal verities, the universals, to escape. The present theological controversy surely illustrates this sad and futile enterprise! If men could only realize that fundamentalists,

as well as modernists, are equally importunate in satisfying the soul with the food of reality, "there might come such a union of men of good will in all the churches as would make the Church a living power and the home of those who are deeply religious and at the same time profoundly 'unorthodox.'"

After rapidly sketching the original of the term modernism, and the rise and fall of modernism in the Roman Catholic Church, and after showing that it has nothing to do with parties or with bodies of doctrine, Dr. Parks comes to this conclusion: "(Modernism) is a state of mind. It is an attempt to 'justify the ways of God to man'—that is, to man in the twentieth century. And the problem is this: Must men and women who are breathing the new atmosphere of freedom, of the larger knowledge which has come as the result of scientific discovery, psychological experience, and historical investigation, be told . . . that they may be permitted to indulge in the luxury of the new knowledge in every department of life except the religious life?" Destroy this free spirit of quest and you either destroy the possibilities of summit living, or else degenerate

**mankind** into a submissive, lock-stepped army of blindly-asserting proletarians. The reformation, once and for all, acknowledged the right of every man to stand in an individual and unique relation with the Father of his spirit, and declared for all time that every believer in his own way should say, "I know him whom I have believed."

Not only has the fundamentalist frequently erred in his definition of a modernist, but he has as frequently misjudged his ideas regarding the supernatural and the miraculous, and the distinction between the two. In the first place the supernatural is made too narrow, and must in the last analysis include not only goodness, but the highest truth and the most celestial beauty. In the second place miracle is too rigid a term; and since God never negates or repudiates himself, we must look far higher than the mere breaking of law. Understanding this, one is in a position to continue with the author, and consider with him the elements of the miraculous and the supernatural in the Bible, especially the two "supreme miracles," the Incarnation and the Resurrection. With his conclusions we are not concerned here; but

we are desperately earnest in trying to reflect the atmosphere of serious, reverent inquiry in which his main argument is conducted. Agnosticism and infidelity do not worry us to-day; but we are handicapped, and frequently well-nigh destroyed, by the attitude of hostility on the part of those who will permit freedom "in widest commonality spread," in all matters save those affecting religion. Our needs are identical, and yet each must discover the satisfaction of his needs in his own way. For the present our individual ways may lie apart, but in the end they all will converge on the summit. Therefore, instead of recrimination and unkindly criticism, let each bid the other *bon voyage*, and say with Saul, "Go, and the Lord be with you!" In the end and on the summit! One heart and one mind! Every mind recognizing at last the supreme fact that in Jesus there had been revealed the highest truths, whatever significance they enjoyed; every heart as "one heart" in loving, lasting devotion to the Lord of every heart's desire.

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CHAPTER XVIII  
THE UNIFYING PRINCIPLE OF  
RELIGION

Would I describe a preacher such as Paul,  
Were he on earth, would hear, approve, and own,  
Paul should himself direct me, I would trace  
His master strokes and draw from his design.  
I would express him simple, grave, sincere;  
In doctrine uncorrupt, in language plain,  
And plain in manner; decent, solemn, chaste,  
And natural in gesture; much impressed  
Himself, as conscious of his awful charge,  
And anxious, mainly, that the flock he feeds  
May feel it too: affectionate in look,  
And tender in address, as well becomes  
A messenger of grace to guilty men.

—*Cowper.*

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE UNIFYING PRINCIPLE OF RELIGION

A SHORT time ago there appeared the latest volume of "The Scholar as Preacher" series by Arthur Gossip, M.A., entitled "From the Edge of the Crowd." The subtitle explains that the book contains the musings of a pagan mind on Jesus Christ. It is pagan only in the sense that the author is himself untheologically minded, and comes upon the Gospel narrative and message with something akin to the primitive simplicity, awe, and alertness of the pagan mind.

The chapter on "God's Roadmakers" (Luke 24: 21) is particularly *apropos* of the present moment. The author points out how we build up a whole personality from a snatch of overheard conversation. "We had hoped that this was He;" that is all that reaches us distinctly, and they are gone. "They were the kind of folk by whom the world moves forward: who live in a *qui vive* of expectancy, always standing on tiptoe, always sure that something big may happen at any time. Hush! Is not this it

(149)

coming now? With people like that God can do anything; but you and I keep thwarting him by sheer dullness of spirit. We are listless, apathetic, blasé, bored, our hopes are small and thin: there is no audacity in our expectation."

We turn to history We read again Thucydides and of the people who had become sick of war, how they form leagues to stop it, take oaths of friendship, bind themselves to submit all future difficulties to arbitration—then some one—a matter of honor—an affair of national dignity and pride—and war again! And as sure as to-morrow comes soars the phoenix through the flames, and a new League of Nations takes the place of the old, and new hopes of old, and yet the same half-plaintive, half-triumphant query, "Is this He? Is this last the hoped-for best?"

A. B. Davidson once called the prophets "always terribly one-sided people." That single idea was that "God is going to do something." "God is surely coming!" cries Isaiah. "He is here, at our very door!" answers Zephaniah. And so each and every one by their faith made it possible, yea, certain, for some great spiritual surprise to take place. It is upon this that the

rest is builded: "And when the time was fulfilled—Jesus came." Did it ever happen otherwise? Truth is an emperor that only comes to visit his subjects along the highway of great longing. Science advances to its kingdom along the avenue of expectancy. Religion comes into its own along the road of loving hearts, "that great-hearted clan of intrepid believers."

The prisoner of Chillon learns in time to grow accustomed to his cell, learns to make friends with the reptiles and insects that infest it, and the dank odors and the dark despair. One day he is impelled by a fancy. He clambers up the wall, bit by bit, until he reaches the little grated window. The lake! all blue and the clear blue sky! Yonder his own white home smiling like a happy thought, and nestling among the clear, green hills of youth! Looked for a second and dropped back! Darkness again, but now choking, maddening, and intolerable, a grave, a hell! "O God," he cries, beating upon the door, "I must get out, must get out, must get out!"

It is this dream in the heart which constitutes the unifying principle in life and religion. How-

ever narrow my existence, however humble my capacity, still love can give me life; truth can control and direct it toward the stars; beauty can enrich it with new magnificence and charm; and goodness can touch it with the divine and make it—me—undying, victorious!

Is it a dream?  
Nay! but the lack of it the dream,  
And failing it life's love and  
wealth a dream,  
And all the world a dream.

This has been the note of triumphant religion and truth. It frets not over the trivial setback, the little momentary opposition. "It is He! It is He! It is He!" and along this road, "through trackless places," God in his majesty sweeps in. This is not confined to Christianity alone; it is a common and unifying element in all religions, and has received in the Buddhist scriptures one of its most beautiful expressions. "Finally, strive on, always remembering that God is not dead!"

The problem with which we are here concerned has nothing to do with modernism or fundamentalism, Protestantism or Catholicism, with theology or polity of any kind. In



the past, as William Adams Brown has pointed out, men have sought common ground in the "common acceptance of historic revelation." And this is both natural and inevitable. "The story of religion in its main outlines is the story of its creative spirits. The great man, the great book, the great work of art—through these the successive generations find their best selves, and are trained to approach God for themselves." (Brown.) But to-day we find it difficult to agree on book, creed, and tradition, and the insistence that we shall, the Abelardian deadly parallel, "*Sic et non*," only succeeds in increasing our division. One goes to imperialism, another to legalism, another to bibliolatry, others to naturalism, to mysticism, to socialism, or to nothing.

This is a false and disastrous method. It emphasizes either origin or method, when the real unifying principle consists in the elemental facts of experience, and a corollary to this, the possibility of more life, enlarged, enriched, triumphant. Progress has rarely been made by emphasizing past achievements or by merely glorying in present experiences, but rather by comparing these with the past, and by judging them with the vision of the unattainable.

On faith as well as on words democratic religion makes heavy demands. To win a living faith is never easy. We have seen how the sense of individual weakness has driven men to seek security in the Church, and how the protest of conscience against the Church has forced earnest spirits back upon themselves. But the democrat in religion must find God everywhere, and point to common men and women as the most conclusive evidence of his presence. His faith requires him to believe that God is making out of humanity as we see it to-day — stumbling, blundering, short-sighted, narrow-minded men and women—the Christian commonwealth of his dreams. Imperialism demands the surrender of freedom. Individualism must abandon the hope of unity. Democratic religion, could it be realized, would conserve both.

Only the religion of Jesus has room for democracy. It has something for the individual—for each the inspiration and assurance he most needs. It has something for all of us together—a fellowship of the spirit more inclusive than any other known to man. It has faith and comradeship. It has the forward look. Christianity is not yet the religion of democracy. But of all existing religions, it has the best fighting chance to become so. (Brown.)

Our religion is built upon the forward look, upon expectation—not upon the thing that has been, nor the glory that now is, but the future kingdom of God. Every new day a new birth, every new hour a new annunciation. “Is it He? Is it He?” Life like this shall suffer no divisive force. As for the end, the words of Principal Rainy are eloquently fitting: “Do

you believe your faith? Do you believe this I am telling you? Do you believe a day is coming, really coming, when you will stand before the throne of God, and the angels will whisper together and say, 'How like Christ he is'?"

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CHAPTER XIX  
PULPIT VULGARITY

From first to last, in all manners of ways, the sermons are a protest, first against coldness, but even still more against meanness, in religion. With coldness they have no sympathy, yet coldness may be broad and large, yet lofty in its aspects; but they have no tolerance for what makes religion little and poor and superficial, for what contracts its horizon and dwarfs its infinite greatness and vulgarizes its mystery. Open the sermons where we will, different readers will rise from them with very different results; . . . but there will always be the sense of unfailing nobleness in the way in which the writer thinks and speaks. It is not only that he is in earnest; it is that he has something which really is worth being earnest about.—*Dean Church in his appreciation of Cardinal Newman's "Parochial and Plain Sermons."*

## CHAPTER XIX

### PULPIT VULGARITY

PROFESSOR GEORGE JACKSON in his latest book, "Reasonable Religion," repeats eleven short articles which originally appeared in the *Manchester Guardian*. They were intended for popular consumption, but they speak the mind of the people, and are worth pondering. In the competition between the sacraments of the Church on the one hand, and preaching by Nonconformity on the other, we have fallen upon strange days. The result of many attempts at a reconciliation between the two has been a sort of hybrid thing, so that those who love worship, sublimely betrothed to beauty and truth, are bored to death by what they behold.

It has been said that "listening to sermons is an acquired modern taste." It is a brand of bravery, for the cultivation of which the Free Churches may take all the credit. The ministry has taken its preaching function almost too seriously, and the pew has supinely made way,

or else countered with a burst of social or sociopolitical zeal, both of which have unwittingly conspired to oust true worship from most of our churches. When we attend "great preaching services" in which the preacher is the *chef-d'œuvre*, or when we attend those "attractive services" in which the natty ushers overdo their sociability and the choir leader hogs the hour, we are almost persuaded to join the Quakers and worship God in the beauty of quietness.

I have used the phrase of Phillips Brooks very often, but must repeat it yet again. The secret of great preaching is "uttering the truth through personality." Men weary of religion accompanied by jazz gospel songs and troubadour preachments, but once in a while a real preacher comes along, and men ask each other how he does it. No hysterics, no buffoonery, yet the people flock to him, just as in the streets of Constantinople when Chrysostom was going to preach in the Church of the Apostles, or the streets of London when Latimer was bravely telling his truth at St. Paul's.

Stopford Brooke once criticized Benjamin Jowett because he preferred to preach upon



good manners, when people were much more concerned about the foundation of Christian living. Joseph Parker also criticized a brother minister because he forever preached upon the stories of the Bible, as if there was nothing more to it than anecdote. He went on: "When Spurgeon first came to London he took for his text 'He hath made us accepted in the Beloved.' Now, you wouldn't know what to make of a text like that." One of the extremities of pulpit vulgarity is the monstrosity of extra-Biblical, extra-religious, extra-Christian, and extra-useless lumber hocked from the sacred desk. Read the lives and the sermons of the great preachers and you will find it true of them all, ancient or modern, white or black, Catholic or Protestant, that "back of it all there lies always a great gospel greatly conceived."

The cause of this vulgarity is the secularization of the minister's work. It has been repeated to monotonous infinity that the work of a minister is prayer, preaching, practical piety, and other alliterative proprieties. But on the other side people demand that the Church shall take notice of unemployment and intemperance, do odd jobs for the government in the

matter of recruiting, raising loans, urging national industry, promoting war gardens, advertising school affairs, and many more. The minister, of course, is the one whom the people mean shall do this. And so it is that, instead of an oratory for prayer, you have the church turned into a ragpicker's paradise, and the minister's study, instead of being a vast whispering gallery of the Spirit, behold it a highly efficient office, equipped with telephone, the door latch hung out, interruption invited, and in constant communication with the world. No wonder, then, that the jaded preacher is only too willing to grasp something on Saturday which will interest the people, even if it will not instruct. No wonder that his soul wears so thin, that the sap of spiritual and physical life is squeezed out of him, and that he slips prematurely, weary and worn, like some Dale, Hughes, or Horne, into his grave. It is true that the pastor's influence and work will enhance his value as a preacher, but nothing will save him from becoming a sounding brass except long, vigorous, profound meditation alone.

Another cause of pulpit vulgarity is the

feeling of the mind of the preacher that he has to compete with the week-day attractions of the world. Nothing could be more insane. Some day I should like to publish a list of sermon themes culled from the daily papers. When I think of them, and then remember the text of Paul, "I glory in the cross of Jesus Christ," and recall the texts of John and Jesus and Bunyan and Luther and Wesley—then, like Shelley, I want to weep, not for Adonais, but for the dignity of the calling of the ministers of Christ. The fault with much of our American theological writing and preaching is its vulgarity and flippancy. Nothing under heaven is so disgusting as irreverence in the pulpit, and especially in those boorish stunts, punning on the parables and trucking about stupid vulgarities which have no earthly connection with the text, with the Scriptures, or with the truth. There is but one reason for the irreverent and unseemly in worship; it is the minister himself, who solemnly vowed at his ordination to go and preach the gospel.

But one of the greatest reasons for pulpit vulgarity is that the preacher is without a gospel. I cannot think of Isaiah entering

upon his work without that mighty and soul-illuminating vision. I cannot imagine John Baptist fervently proclaiming his message without a clear, distinct, imperious command to his own mind. I cannot picture in my mind Jesus, surely and sublimely growing in the conviction of his own Messiahship, sweeping the multitude to their knees, as they hailed him King and Lord, without having been so sure of himself, that it was the most natural corollary to impress others with the fact, that he was in a very unique way Son of God. The saddest thing in all this world, after the fall of a mighty spirit, is that man who would stand in the sacred places of a poet or a priest, clothed with sacred vestments which his manner mocks, and bearing the symbol of power he does not possess. The man whose mind and heart the truth of God has touched will have a gospel full of immediateness, full of the eternities, which he will proclaim with power, with dignity, and with reverence befitting an ambassador from so high a court.

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CHAPTER XX  
THE DECAY OF YELLING

I find more profit in sermons on either good tempers or good works than in what are vulgarly called gospel sermons. That term has now become a mere cant word: I wish none of our society would use it. It has no determinate meaning. Let but a pert, self-sufficient animal that has neither sense nor grace bawl out something about Christ or his blood, or justification by faith, and his hearers cry out, "What a fine gospel sermon!" Surely the Methodists have not so learned Christ!  
—*From a letter written by John Wesley.*



## CHAPTER XX

### THE DECAY OF YELLING

ONCE upon a time, before the days of noiseless guns, smokeless chimneys, rubber heels, and the crusades against unnecessary sounds, it was believed that there existed some sort of inevitable relationship between the height of a scream at a revival meeting and the depth of a religious experience; between the length and sonority of a testimony in class meeting, and the eternal virtue of the life willingly dissecting itself in public. Those were the days when local preachers were selected for their vehemence, and when pulpit Bibles were wonderfully and fearfully bound, not to withstand the onslaughts of criticism, but to resist the prancing, pounding, perspiring enthusiasm of him who was ordained to break the bread of life.

Now there is something to be said for the direct and dynamic method. As Parker somewhere wrote, "The sermon that has to expel devils and right wrongs must not be a recitation or a lullaby, but a sacrifice—not mere words, but drops of blood." "The vulgar man!" a

wealthy lady is reported to have remarked after a sermon by a noted preacher; "why, he said, 'You sinners!'" Such good folk like plainness, but they want it at the wrong point. Fancy a preacher standing before his congregation and making a gesture of this kind: "Brethren, you must repent, as it were, and be converted in a measure, or you will be damned to some extent."

The tendency to-day is not to minimize candor or to soften the tone of authority, but to discount spurious sensationalism. The true fountain of eloquence must always be the highest truth, the rarest beauty, and the divinest good, exalted and empowered by fervent feeling. But, too often, fervency is associated with noise, loud and continuous. Sermons, to change the life, must reach into the mind, satisfy its questionings, direct its gropings, and stimulate its faculties. Long and careful preparation without a feeling of reality, which experience alone gives, results in a lack of conviction. Experience and all the zeal and fervency of the world, without hard, sweaty, mental grinding, end in sound and fury and froth. When the ears are being stunned, the mind is not being

reached. When the preacher's voice reaches to within an octave of a scream, his powers of collected reasoning are in temporary abeyance. Not infrequently both preacher and people confuse eloquence with yell-o-quence.

And with a return to sanity in preaching, there is noticed a similar movement toward sanity in church publicity. The raucous sermon is as out of date as the raucous billboard. Power is always associated with dignity and beauty. Bishop McConnell in his book, "Public Opinion and Theology," has an interesting chapter on "Publicity in the Kingdom of God." What he says here is quite along the same line with Dr. Stidger's "Standing Room Only," and "Wanted—A Congregation" by Douglas. These men, who know what the drawing power of eloquence means, bitterly arraign the cheap, tawdry claptrap of so many of our churches in their straining after packed houses, after what these writers call crowds, but not congregations. Lengthy quotation would be illuminating if space permitted, especially the sections on church finances, the raffling off of religion at a spurious species of revival service, and the vaudeville billboard,

with the wild, weird sermon themes that bellow at you. Jesus was timely, forceful, practical, even revolutionary, but never once did he sacrifice the urgency of directing the minds of men, and the dignity of truth, to gesticulating garrulity. It is difficult to refrain from falling into a like error of excess when speaking of the jazz symbolism of the modern church billboard.

Wesley was right. Sensational preaching is the swinging of the pendulum away from sound preaching; and roaring evangelism has no basis in reason or common sense. We frequently come across homiletic sleight of hand and dexterous, if not dare-devilish, exegesis, which always fail to establish us in truth, or in confidence with the preacher. Preaching and publicity, which lack the elements of sober sense and refining dignity, have not the right to be called worship. The so-called getting down to the people, for which there is a craze to-day, is only getting down into a man's ministerial grave. A very great percentage of the homiletic helps in demand by preachers, as well as books on practical psychology, are only thinly disguised aids to draw the crowds, "cribs" to assist a preacher to know "human nature"

better, and what "human natur'" will fall for, demand, and gormandize upon. It is as intelligent to appeal to this morbid appetite as to make executions public, because so many seem to fatten on such things. It comes as no surprise, therefore, where the ministry is estimated in such terms, that churches break out all over the country with a kind of megalomania mumps, a craze for increases, booms, drives, membership hunts, numerical advances "over last year's report," until we have developed a kind of actuarial Christianity.

How different all this is from the method of Him who came saying, "Learn of me," whose dearest title was simply "Teacher." But these others have their reward.

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## CHAPTER XXI

WORSHIP THE LORD IN HOLY ARRAY

Where shall we get religion? Beneath the bloom-  
ing tree,  
Beside the hill-encircling brooks that loiter to the  
sea,  
Beside all twilight waters, beneath the noonday  
shades,  
Beneath the dark cathedral pines and through the  
tangled glades;  
Wherever the old ways of life provoke the dumb  
dead sod  
To tell its thoughts in violets, the soul takes hold  
on God.  
To smell the growing clover, and scent the  
blooming pear,  
Go forth to seek religion—and find it anywhere.  
What is the church? The church is man where  
his awed soul goes out,  
In reverence to a mystery that swathes him all  
about.  
When any living man in awe gropes forward in his  
search;  
Then in that hour, that living man becomes the  
living church,  
Then, though in wilderness or in waste, his soul is  
swept along  
Down waves of prayer, through aisles of praise,  
up altar-stairs of song.  
And where man fronts the mystery with spirit  
bowed in prayer,  
There is the universal church—the church of God  
is there.

—*Robert Browning.*



## CHAPTER XXI

### WORSHIP THE LORD IN HOLY ARRAY

IDLING aimlessly about a Vancouver second-hand bookstall, reverently employing the time while waiting for the hour of my departure East, I came unexpectedly upon "The Upton Letters." The "Letters" were written at a time when letter writing was still something of an enviable art, when the man of breeding and travel and culture seated himself comfortably, and in a leisurely manner, and with a healthy mind, spoke of beautiful things beautifully. T. B., the author of these letters, was a priest of the Church of England, and a teacher of youths as well. Most certainly he was a high priest of the beautiful.

There was a time when art and ritual dwelt in the same temple together. Men rightly thought that neither could be properly understood without the other, for have they not a common root? The same impulse, so to speak, sends a man to the cathedral, the art gallery, and the theater. Such a statement in these latter days would seem to border on irrever-

ence. The Athenian Acropolis was dedicated to the gods; but here, surrounded by temples and adorned by Periclean marbles, was also the theater of the Greeks, and to attend was an act of worship. The central seat was for the priest of Dionysos Eleutherios, just as if the General Superintendent or the Archbishop of Canterbury were enthroned in the central stall.

And what is said of Greece is likewise true of Egypt, Rome, all of the primitive tribes of men, and of Roman-, Greek-, and Anglo-Catholicism down to the present. Protestantism in general and nonconformity in particular seem to have been either ignorant of, or indifferent to, the interdependence of art and ritual. Since art and religion both spring from the emotional nature of man, both must seek their justification in experience. Ritual, no less than art, is the outward expression of an inward experience. Both are of life and for life. What life has joined together let no man put asunder.

Matthew Arnold was not alone in complaining bitterly of the "Protestantism of the Protestant Religion." What began as a great and glorious reaffirmation of values, tended

more and more to become a reflection of the feudal politics of the period which gave the movement birth. What began with Luther and the Reformers as a vigorous emphasis of the experimental nature of religion, and the unrestricted communion between the individual's own soul and the mind of God, tended to become increasingly involved in the uncertainties of doctrinal dispute. There will always be a proud place for mental independence, for a thoughtful nonconformity, but a religion which will rest its chief glory upon its Protestantism, upon a negative, repressive, and restrictive attitude of mind and manner, must expect to become superseded by some more full-orbed synthesis of thought and life.

On the whole, Protestantism has never been friendly to art. Art has found no hostel in the church buildings of Protestantism generally. The cathedrals and ministers of Europe prove the rule by their very rarity. There are two reasons why we find ourselves in this condition. In the first place the very Protestantism of our dissent made any aping of Popery unthinkable, and our forbears swung to a barren extreme. Then Protestantism became a great missionary

faith. Protestantism and propagandism being synonymous, the very multiplicity of the subsequent divisions of Protestantism, and the myriads of the preaching places (propagandism demanded little more) forbade anything but mere meetinghouses. Our churches are patterned after Roman law courts, but there is no special reason why the tradition should persist. Religion has ever clothed itself with the highest forms of beauty, and there is no earthly reason why, in these days, the house of God should be as barren as a barrack. There is no reason why we should surrender the cloying ritual of Popery for the cast-iron "Order of Service." Beauty is only relative. It was associated in the mind of the Greeks with truth, as Keats reminds us in a well-known line, "Beauty is truth, truth beauty." Allied with the truth of the thought, and with the purity of the sentiment, there ought to be the element of timeliness. Neither the Bible nor experience knows anything about a faith once and for all time delivered to the saints. There is beauty in nature's variety. Can we not have a new synthesis to-day? Can we not have a fresh association of art, reason, and morals? Protestantism is returning to a

happy marriage of the special season to the appropriate ceremony, and is finding thereby that reason is strengthened and purified, and the emotions exalted and refined. In the perfect alliance of truth, beauty, and goodness there will be found the perfect symmetry of life. Art is superabundant and positive and creative. Religion is "a sense of dependence," introspective and negative. This is why the priest has depended upon the artist, the sculptor, and the musician to interpret his inner experiences in visible forms.

I am weary of deeds done inside myself,  
I am weary of voyages inside myself.

But to return to "The Upton Letters." He writes:

I love to sit silent, while the great bell hums in the roof, and the gathering footsteps of young and old patter through the echoing aisles. There is a hush of expectation. . . . Then murmurs a voice, an Amen rises in full concord, and as it dies away the slumberous thunder of a pedal note rolls on the air; the casements whirr, the organ speaks. That fills, as it were, to the brim, as with some sweet fragrant and potion, the cup of beauty; and the dreaming, inquiring spirit sinks content into the flowing, the aspiring tide, satisfied with some heavenly answer to its sad questionings. . . . The holy service proceeds with a sense of exquisite

deliberation, leading one as by a ladder, through the ancient ways, up to the message of to-day. Through psalm and canticle and anthem the solemnity passes on; and perhaps some single slender voice, some boyish treble, unconscious of its beauty and pathos, thrown into relief, . . . comes to assure the heart that it can rest, if but for a moment, upon a deep and inner peace. . . . Then falls the monotone of prayer; and the organ wakes again for one last message, pouring a flood of melody from its golden throats, and dying away by soft gradations into the melodious bourdon of its close.

Through the window I looked out. The Fraser Canyon was flooded with the golden light of the full moon. Its cathedral walls rose up to the stars like purest amber. Far below the river boiled and leaped and danced like fairies in holiday, flinging up silver mist and star dust, then hurried on with a mysterious, breathless little hymn down the fairy causeway lost among the mountains. And up aloft, upon the dizzy summits, the everlasting snow glistened like a radiant jewel-strewn altar cloth, upon which the solemn stars were set for candles. If nature must, why may not man, "worship the Lord in holy array"?

Hands of morning, take the cup  
 Whence the Life of Love is drained;  
 Hold it, raise it, lift it up  
 Till the lucent heavens be stained.

Joy and sorrow, lip to lip,  
Lost in likeness at the end,  
O my Friend,  
Taste thy wine of fellowship.

—*Marjorie Pickthall.*

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CHAPTER XXII  
THE ENRICHMENT OF WORSHIP

A constant constitution of mere pulpit entertainment for the power of worship is the most striking evidence of distress which a church can furnish. It overlooks the fact that the religious idea is, after all, the most powerful factor in human life.

The herded pines commune and have deep thoughts, a secret they assemble to discuss.

—*Robert Browning.*

But man, the two-fold creature, apprehends  
The two-fold manner, in and outwardly,  
And nothing in the world comes single to him  
A mere itself—cup, column, or candlestick,  
All patterns of what shall be in the mount;  
The whole temporal show related royally,  
And knelt up to eternal significance  
Through the open arms of God.

—*Elizabeth Barrett Browning.*

## CHAPTER XXII

### THE ENRICHMENT OF WORSHIP

WRITING some time ago in the *American Journal of Religion*, Professor Coe declared that he who would understand contemporary religion "should by no means overlook the movement for the enrichment of Protestant worship." We hear frequently enough the question as to why the Church slackens her grasp upon the masses, and a hundred answers have been given. But a far more subtle question is, "Why are innovations taking place in the forms of worship, and are they significant of some modification which must be taking place in religion itself?" Are new needs and new experiences seeking fresh and characteristic forms of expression and satisfaction?

These questions, it will be seen, go right to the bottom of the whole problem, and involve the very existence of religion and life. It is true that worship, with a veneration of Deity, assists in the bridging of a great gulf by spiritual exercises. In Catholicism the effort is made to raise earth to heaven, but Protestantism, dis-

pensing with an elaborate sacrificial system, and retreating to the other extremity, would bring heaven down to earth and involve the stars in man's morality. That has always been the error of Protestantism; it has been too eager to stress the humanity of Christ, and in doing so has lost the overmastering consciousness of divinity. As this element has prevailed the ideal of worship has receded, and "exercises," "Sunday services," "orders of the day," have taken its place. Real worship looks from man Godward; preaching looks from God manward; both belong together, but to-day we tend to stress the sermon, and our whole attention is diverted in the wrong direction.

This is the reason why so many Protestant services chill and freeze men. There is plenty of perfunctory respect, but a lack of real reverence. The Scripture readings are nearly always careless; the hymns are frequently chosen with no relation to the spirit of the hour; the prayers are often unstudied, slovenly, and meandering, preludes to the sermon. It seems impossible to inspire reverence without some adequate and fitting accompaniment of dignity and beauty, and possibly even of grandeur.

“Our worship ought to be an expression in some form, fixed or free, of the overwhelming consciousness of the majestic, personal presence of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.”

This brings us back to our first sentence. The Church seems to have entered upon a new renaissance of catholicity. The negative and restrictive attitude toward life and worship is not being combated by argument, but is being vetoed in our everyday experience. The changes which are unmistakably taking place in our forms of worship do indicate a radical change in our religious consciousness. This changed attitude is not, as I have said, an argumentative thing. It has reasons, but its verdicts are expressed in positive affirmations, rather than in negative syllogisms. A few of these attitudes may well be named.

It affirms that a real enrichment of worship could be secured by some departure from our present artistic and architectural standards. True worship may exist in some other arrangement besides that semicircle of red-padded pews, facing a conventional pulpit, flanked by choirs, and set over against a background of gilded organ pipes.

A frequent cause for the negation of the spirit of true worship is the choir. Old cathedrals allowed the choir a processional and a recessional, and then concealed them behind heavy carvings. We arrange them in such an order that reflection and meditation are well-nigh impossible. Few choirs know how to make the best of a bad job. Nothing much can be done so long as they are perched where they are; but in the case of these smiling, bobbed-haired seraphs, those restless worship-hindering folk, who chatter and ogle, and turn the period of the "long prayer" into a rehearsal—they must either be abolished or hidden by a curtain.

And again, who has not seen a preacher, gorgeous in some variegated horse collar and cheap tinsel robes, lending all the dignity of a lord high chancellor to some lodge ceremony in a little, smoky, sultry lodge room? And who has not seen the same man in the house of God, combining the characteristics of auctioneer and benevolent host?

And then the order of service. The evolution of this once practical and simple ceremony has resulted in a monstrosity. There is a woeful

poverty in the variety of the hymns and meters used in most churches, in spite of the richness of the hymn and tune books. Only indifference could permit a congregation to go on repeating the old doggerel over and over again, and only laziness can account for the way in which they are rendered. The "long prayer" must be revised. If it is to remain extempore, there must be more worship in it, more content, and less general information and unrelated personal opinions, social, political, and other causerie. The announcements are ever an abomination. The minister who will close an uninspired reading of the Scriptures, and launch into endless announcements, pleading for a full attendance at the board meeting, a generous response to the financial canvass, and enlarge upon the grand and glorious time expected at the pie contest, ought to be disciplined. The dedicatory prayer should be very brief and beautiful, and not the rumbling second cousin to the "long prayer," which it frequently is. The offering usurps the place of the sacrifice. The high priest ought to make the act as beautiful as it is significant.

The preacher who is conscious only of a crowded gallery will be empty of prayer, and

the congregation, conscious only of sermons, words, and announcements for the coming week, cannot engage in worship. To the Catholic the eucharist is both a passion and a pentecost. Apostolic succession, church, with or with a capital C, phylacteries and stations of the cross, count for little, unless the act of worship not only discovers high truth and eternal spirit, but likewise ravishes the heart with tokens of beauty, and conducts the soul to the foot of the throne.

We must somehow come to realize that we attend Church to worship, not to listen to a pious, popular, or profound preacher; that the building is not a meetinghouse or a music hall, but a sanctuary consecrated to the service of God; that the atmosphere does not depend exclusively upon the janitor, the pleasantries of the preacher, and the "efforts" of "a full choir," but in symbols of faith and in high tokens of a Presence; and that the drawing power of the church is not a publicity agent, or a preacher who pops sensational corn on the pulpit, but the ability to impart a sacramental experience to all who may attend.

The preacher is largely to blame for things



as they are. He permits smiling ushers to pounce upon you and welcome you facetiously into your own Father's house. He has scarcely pronounced the benediction before he is racing down the aisle to the rear door. He then goes chatting and handshaking and passing along pleasantries as if he were in his own drawing room, until the sleepy sexton gets desperate and commences to turn off the lights. He permits some irreverent braggart to desecrate the front of his temple with billboards in red, box-car type. He builds his sermons around current topics, and forgets the eternities. It is more than fitting that some places should be called Mr. So-and-So's Church, than they should be called a Christian Church or the House of God.

In closing I cannot help but repeat a bit of stern advice John Wesley once gave to his preachers: "Be serious; let your motto be, Holiness to the Lord. Avoid all lightness as you would hell-fire, and trifling as you would cursing and swearing."

Enrichment in worship will follow a revision of our order of service, but it will depend more upon a vivid realization of the meaning and end

of true worship, a fresh enthusiasm to make our religion more catholic in its sympathies and affinities, and more sacramental in its interpretation and expression of religion and life. Then preacher and people shall be as priests that offer gifts, and as those "who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things."

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CHAPTER XXIII  
MINISTERIAL ETHICS

The true minister's loyalty must be to an inner standard, to an unseen Master, to the applause of his own conscience.

The word of the wind and the starlight clear,  
Of the meadow with dew-drops pearled,  
Wheresoever I turn I can always hear,  
For Love is the Heart of the World.

—*Albert Durrant Watson.*

Love suffers long and is kind.

—*St. Paul.*

Tenderness of heart was in him transformed into infinite sweetness, vague poetry, and universal charm.—“*Vie de Jesu,*” *Renan.*

## CHAPTER XXIII

### MINISTERIAL ETHICS

DR. S. Z. BATTEN, in the "Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science," endeavored to set forth the ethics of the ministry. Other professions have fairly defined and authenticated codes of ethics. When a medical doctor or a lawyer, for example, speaks of a thing as nonprofessional, we know what he means. These customs and courtesies have, moreover, become so well established and so universal that national boundaries mean little to them. The shop rules of labor unions or the obligations of secret societies are not more binding or sacred than these unwritten "rules of the game," which preserve the gallantry and dignity of the world's highest professions.

Dr. Batten says: "The ministry as a body has no code of professional ethics. Yet the ministry, as a body of men dedicated to a certain life and service, has very rigid standards by which men are pledged and their conduct tested." He believes that a formal code of ethics

would be impracticable because it would discredit the ideal of the ministry. I believe that this is scarcely an adequate reason. Jesus held his disciples to a strict accountability for their behavior. He himself set a beautiful example in the unfailing courtesies which distinguished his social intercourse, as well as his chivalry in regard to his opponents in the Orthodox Church and in these countless acts of thoughtfulness and tact, which some call the ethics of the profession and others call simply good breeding.

The multitudinous sects into which religion is divided make the matter of a uniform code of professional ethics rather difficult of attainment. Varying values are placed upon the ministerial function in the same denomination, and such discrepancies occur between others, that a codified law of conduct for public deportment, as well as for private performance, seems almost impossible. Moreover, the multitudinous ways in which opportunities present themselves to the conscientious servants of men make it almost needless to attempt any elaborate statement of professional ethics.

But some such standard is already in use; and while it may be difficult to formulate, neverthe-

less it does actually exist, as we shall endeavor to point out.

It has already become a threadbare maxim that "the soul of all culture is the culture of the soul." This is the very heart of etiquette. Just because the work of a minister has to do with the souls of men, he will rarely blunder who, in his social activities as well as in his religious duties, keeps his soul on top. The correct thing will be the thing with most sheer kindness in it, the most unfailing good will, the most believing of the best in all things. No emergency will present a surprise to catch him off his guard, for he will neither stoop to do a mean thing nor will he look above the common thing. Whether they be books of rules, they shall fail—but love suffers long and is invariably kind and in good taste.

A great deal of what we were taught in our classes on practical theology had to do with the mere externals of the subject. For instance, we were instructed how to conduct weddings and funerals and christenings in the most approved manner. We heard a good deal about the dignity, the honor, and the safeguards of the profession. Dignity of conduct was en-

joined, while evil communications were forbidden in order that good manners might not be corrupted. And then, of course, professional etiquette eschewed all talk of wages or profit, frowned upon all forms of sensationalism, whether of red neckties, fast horses, conjugal inconstancy, or Wild-West methods of church advertising. Of course, a minister would no more seek preferment than he could openly abet sin, and as for prudently taking a mortgage on one of his parishoner's farms—the Lord forbid! Finally he was to hold as sacred all confidences and confessions; to uphold the good name of a brother minister in his absence as he would in his presence; to prefer, in all honor, the aspirations of others; and to speak out the truth as his own mind dictated without fear or favor, be the quarterly check what it may.

As an interesting experiment I have kept a memo of the points of etiquette raised by my friends, and I pass a few of them along.

One says: "Don't visit an old field. Don't keep the people glued to you. Write now and then if you must, if occasion demands it, but have a heart. Don't feel that you have to spend your vacation 'among old friends.' If



you must come back for a wedding or a funeral, write the minister before you come, call on him, and give him a place of honor." How many sorry experiences there have been because some dear brother loved to hog the limelight.

Another weary spirit says: "Don't imagine that everybody needs to be enlightened, and that you must talk ceaselessly, even if you cannot talk wisely." These talk-pests are not rare. They frequent conferences, committees, and social gatherings of all kinds. They seem to think that what they say is of so much importance.

And here's a sorehead who asks why it is that, when you are asked to go out to a suburb and preach some Sunday, the parson canters to the rear to shake hands with the young people, and lets you get away without even thanking you? "Why doesn't the minister offer you a cup of tea, since the parsonage is not far away, and your carfare? You may decline, but it is nice to have the opportunity of declining!"

And then they come thick and fast. "They ought to give a course in college on introducing a visiting minister. He who would steal his time by a long-winded introductory speech ought to be banished. He who would fill up

five minutes with fulsome and embarrassing twaddle ought to be banished twice. But he who would get up after the address, and rehearse it for the benefit of the people, to whom it may have been even more obvious than to his own mind—let him be guillotined!"

"If you think enough of a man to ask him to be your special preacher for a day, assist him by posting him as to trains, his host, the exact nature of the occasion, just what you expect of him, and send a card a day or so before to remind him. It will settle his own mind and assure him that you are alert. He is not a prophet and has no other way of knowing."

"When the treasurer asks, 'Now what are your expenses?' and your special preacher blushing-ly replies that it comes to exactly \$6.58, don't rob the juvenile offerings for the coppers—steel yourself to an expansive frame of mind and make it even money! Lay down a crisp \$7 bill with a generous gesture."

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## CHAPTER XXIV

WORDS! WORDS! WORDS!

Thou hast the words of eternal life.

—*St. John.*

The words of Jesus . . . the words of our Lord shine by their own light, they carry their own credentials. There are no other words like them, they are unique. . . . They have a peculiar force which expresses authority or reason with the hearer: they penetrate, they convict, they reveal. The charm and the wonder of them are as fresh to-day, for the unlearned as well as for the learned, as when the people were astonished at his doctrine.—*Archbishop of Armagh.*

His thoughts were as a pyramid up-piled,  
On whose far top an angel stood and smiled,  
Yet in his heart he was a little child.

—*Unknown.*

## CHAPTER XXIV

### WORDS! WORDS! WORDS!

"WHAT do you read, my lord?" said Polonius; and Hamlet answered: "Words, words, words." One would almost imagine that the Melancholy Dane had been a reviewer living in the present day, so aptly does he express the weary nausea of which we have not infrequently heard our contemporaries complain. And yet, between the seething sea of mere words and the roaring ocean of more words "a foot-and-a-half long," there is a friendly isthmus of real literature. "Save a living man," said Charles Kingsley, "nothing is so wonderful as a book."

There are many kinds of books. There are books that, like patient camels, uncomplainingly bear weighty burdens. Some, like trusty slaves, hasten to perform our bidding. Others frown down upon us from awful heights, the frosty pinnacles of specialization thunder in polysyllables and smell heavy of must. And there are books of sheer delight, jovial masters beaming good-naturedly over polished, gold-

rimmed spectacles, that draw one lovingly about them, and intrigue the spirit "to their own inaccessible home."

In these books of enchantment we forget that there are such things as words. The adages about "all words are faint," "words are but sands," "but wind," "are ripples," "counters," "nimble servitors," and all that, fade forever from the mind while we lose ourselves in sublime contemplation and the sheer delight of artistry. And like all real artistry, whether the medium be marble, bronze, or any other, true art demonstrates its real greatness by its supreme triumph over the limitations of the medium, and achieves that degree of timelessness and inevitableness which we call perfection. The substance of literature must ever be beauty and truth, and words, the only material the builder possesses, must clothe the spirit with whatever reality it may possess. Supremely well done, as in the case of great poetry, it remains unique and almost untranslatable. The language that conveys the propositions of science and mathematics presents no difficulty to the translator. There are other literatures which draw upon those intui-

tions, symbolisms, and associations which underlie all linguistic expression, the Esperanto of the spirit known of all men.

It is to these artists we shall ever turn with jubilant expectation and infinite delight, those poets and writers, of all ages and tongues, who, having interpreted the minds of their own people supremely well, have thereby interpreted mankind in general. And so it happens that in Dante, Dostoevsky, or Shakespeare, or Goethe, or Molière, or Whitman, or Carman, the universe for the while speaks Italian, Russian, English, German, or French.

Having hinted at the fact that there is such a thing as creative writing, may I emphasize another point at which I have also hinted—namely, that there is such a thing as creative reading. As in the classic the author has given of his very life, epitomized the spirit of his people, and mirrored the mind of the world, so in reading the classic the constructive reader also imparts something infinitely precious to the masterpiece. He gives himself. No sooner do you open a book than you create, add something. The more profit you enjoy, the more have you spent. You must consciously become a

part of the spiritual structure, must genuinely experience the passion of love, the victoriousness of faith, the thrill of truth, the loveliness of beauty, and the supremacy of goodness. It requires a great person to read greatly. The soldier glows with eagerness as the tales of battle are retold. The traveler palpitates with delight as he reads of the great places he has visited. The lover blushes and trembles with emotion as he reads the pages of pure and sublime emotion. Some great and revealing experience throws into commanding relief some philosophy, theology, or scientific speculation, which before had only caused a repulsive chill.

Therefore, as in every book we meet the experience of the author, so likewise in every book do we meet something of ourselves. And through it all we are in search of those truths which will quench our mind hunger and thirst, in search of beauties which we feel must be somewhere to satisfy the infinite yearning of celestially-formed senses, in search of that goodness which shall bring us closer to our inheritance of godhood. As we read we build, create! We long to read that literature which is not mere words, not the prurient trash, flung at our hap-



less heads in the form of cheap fiction, not the words, words, words of carping orthodoxy, in all its guises, not the jingling words of wordy programs and patented panaceas. What we search for, and hope to find, are those great mountain chains that run along the backbones of the continents of thought, scaling which we may behold heavens open, and hear the imperishable words of an abiding spiritual order. Nothing less than the best will satisfy. Every man desires to be, dares to be, a master builder somehow. He will consort with none other than his kind, if he can but find the way into their immortal company.

In the last analysis, therefore, words must make literature and literature must be for life's sake. While we shall always admire that airy company, mounted on pinions of eagles or nightingales swimming among the star spaces or swooping among the scented, sun-spangled shades of old gardens, in pursuit of pretty and precise words; while we shall never lose the power of delight at sheer loveliness and comeliness and felicity, yet, while we remain in the midst of life, we must have life, new as the morning and radiant as the sunrise. This may not always be obtained in purple passages, glittering paragraphs, glorified syntax, and

fantastic subtleties." "It is becoming a neglected truth that greatness or intensity of soul produces finer literature than a strange or intricate use of words, and that a starry passion will not ponder beside the barriers of expression, but crash through almost before it is aware of them."

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CHAPTER XXV  
LITERARY VESPERS

It is historically true that for five centuries and more no other English book has been so widely read in this island or so closely connected with our national life or has left so strong a mark upon the mass of our literature. At the present time the Bible is probably less widely read and less directly influential in our life and literature than it has been at any time since the Reformation.

The power of the Bible upon our language, our literature, our national life and thought, has been lost sight of because the possibility, has not hitherto been imagined that a liberal education may be, and should be, not only a gift within the reach of every child, but the very gift purposed by the State in undertaking the elementary training of its citizens.

For these reasons we desire that in all the schools of the country, elementary as well as secondary, the reading of the Bible should not be confined to the time set apart for religious instruction, but that its claim upon the time devoted to English studies should also be recognized. If any difficulty is felt in using the Bible itself in this way, we suggest that it may be avoided by the use of books of literary extracts in which selected passages from the Bible find a place beside other examples of great literature. —“*Report on the Teaching of English*” (Sir Henry Newbolt).

## CHAPTER XXV

### LITERARY VESPERS

THERE were 7,000 new books published in America last year. That is a terrifying total to those who imagine that ninety-nine per cent of the modern literary output is sheer flapdoodle. But by far the greatest percentage of these books was of a serious nature. The novels numbered something under 250. This means that people are thinking, are thinking seriously enough, and in large enough numbers, to make it worth while to publish six thousand books into which one may sink his wisdom teeth.

This is of the highest importance as news value. The world is not running entirely to celluloid drama and jazz. There is little truth in the assertion that men are letting movie syndicates do their thinking for them. Then, if the demand for good books is steadily on the increase, it behooves the leaders of the minds of men, our teachers and preachers, to step lively and keep far enough ahead so they can truthfully be said to lead.

One of the loveliest discoveries of the age is the literary vesper. Indeed the place of books in the life of the Church has always been something in the relationship of the Book of books, a cordial linking up of the printed page everywhere. But in our own day ministers have set themselves the task of bringing the best of our own literature into stimulating and ennobling relationship with their people. Everywhere there are to be found those choice spirits who try to interest others in their literary loves, who feel that it is worth while telling their people of the master works of literature. As I have said before, some of the most significant literary valuations and appreciations of great literary masterpieces have been the work of ministers of the gospel, interpreters of the Scriptures, who have accomplished this signal service for humanity in the regular discharge of their prophetic function in the pulpit.

I read somewhere, not long ago, a first-rate bit of advice to members of pulpit supply committees; it is this: "Discover the minister you are seeking in his study." Find him out in his native habitat; see the company his mind keeps; examine the tools with which he works;

explore the shafts his mind is digging; train your lenses on the heavens he is mapping. A man may have traveled, he may have the gift of tongues, and be a veritable genius for organization; but the minister who would presume to enter his pulpit in this age without profound study and wide reading is perpetrating an inexcusable insult upon a group of inquiring spirits, who have no other alternatives than a painful genesis of sublime forbearance, or a reluctant, but nevertheless determined, exodus.

The general reader is incessantly calling for the best religious books. The true ministers of our churches are alive to the need. The great preacher knows that his chiefest success is a *great* congregation. The preacher can do his best work and achieve the most lasting results where the congregation itself is preparing to contribute intelligence and intellectual power to his work. Therefore, it is imperative that the minister should point the way forever to the library. He must constantly place before people the very best in history, sociology, philosophy, ethics, and literature. This can best be accomplished through the literary vesper, which may take the form of either a

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sermon or a book-talk after the evening service, or little, carefully planned and skillfully conducted home university study groups centering around subjects of common interest.

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CHAPTER XXVI

CAN THE MINISTRY SAVE ITSELF?

There is in the world only one figure of absolute beauty: Christ.—*Feodor Dostoevsky.*

The new era is ushering itself in by a new religion, and that religion is not merely the Christian religion, but an expression of it. . . . Religion now becomes the sum of all human aspirations; worship the sum of all human service; and all the workers are worshipers. The Church loses one by one its functions, and ceases to exist as a separate institution, . . . but its place is taken by the universal communion of a humanity pressing forward to the prize of its high calling.—“*Man, the Social Creator,*” *Henry Demarest Lloyd.*

I want for once in my life to have the power to mold a human destiny.—“*Hedda Gabler,*” *Ibsen.*

A power stronger than its own will tear it away. Love, I thought, is verily stronger than death and the terror of death. By love, only by love, is life sustained and moved.—*Turgenev.*

## CHAPTER XXVI

### CAN THE MINISTRY SAVE ITSELF?

THERE is a famous and oft-repeated story of a clergyman who, when called upon to preach before Queen Victoria, is reported to have sought the counsel of her Prime Minister, Lord Beaconsfield. "If you preach for half an hour," said the great and eccentric man, "Her Majesty will be bored. If for a quarter of an hour, Her Majesty will be pleased. If for ten minutes, Her Majesty will be delighted." "But what can I say in ten minutes?" asked the astonished divine. "That will be a matter of complete indifference to Her Majesty."

Now, while this seems to bear all the earmarks of folklore, there is suggested by this quaint bit of legend one quality which many moderns count for righteousness in regard to sermons. That is brevity. "Make it snappy," is the imperious dictum of the church, the music hall, and the forum. Clowns, curates, congressmen have to put brevity and pep into it or they saw the solitary air.

There is no use bemoaning the fact. There are styles in sermons as there are in furniture or frocks. Paul found that out when Apollos stepped out of the finishing schools and added a few spellbinding flourishes to the old story. Maybe there was more vital sap in what the young associate had to say, and therefore there is some point to the wise words of the elder orator when he said that he planted but his colleague watered! But the reason for the reaction from the long-drawn-out rumble and thunder and threatening of our sermons of yesterday seems to be a well-meant desire to avoid rhetoric, dullness clothed with mock divinity, and to get at the facts straightaway. There can be no harm in that. The essence of preaching has not changed. It seems still to be an effectual and fervent answer to that ringing question, "Men and brethren, what shall we do to be saved?"

The English pulpit has fallen on evil days. Father Bull, whose book "Sermon Construction" has just been published, would perhaps admit it. "Greek rhetoric founded the Christian sermon," says Hatch; "this is why there is an element of sophistry in preaching." And the decline of what was once so important a teacher of our public worship is due partly to a reaction against

rhetoric—which is at a discount not only in the Church but in parliament and in the law courts; Partly to increasing indifference to the technicalities with which sermons still commonly deal; partly to the tendency which came in with the Oxford movement to subordinate the ministry of the Word to the administration of a ritual; most of all perhaps to the relatively low culture of the modern pulpit. These causes are intimately connected, and, indeed, separable in thought only: their result is what we see. A distinguished French academician was lately taken the rounds of the principal London preachers, Anglican and Nonconformist. The impression left on him was that of the Dunciad: “Dullness is sacred in a sound divine.” The preachers have nothing to say, and say it badly. In France they have also nothing to say—(*Omnibus hoc vitium est cantoribus*) but they say it well.—*The Spectator*, August 12, 1922.

Can you recall a generation when the preaching function of the ministry has been without its wonder-workers? Can you name a decade in the Christian era when some one of the priests of the Church did not sound successfully the advance to some high and holy enterprise? How was it done? Certainly not with hysterics and buffoonery. The preaching that startled Palestine into a new world-reviving enthusiasm was a ministry of quiet, deep, methodical teaching. The method of the Master has been the method of his master builders in every age

since. Compare the utterances of Savonarola or St. Francis, of Baronius, Calvin, Wesley, Robertson, and hundreds more. It was a preaching ministry of content, a ministry of terrible urgency and immediateness. It was a ministry not content to shoot blank cartridges at dummy men. There is still point to the old division of ministers into those who preach because they have something to say, and those who preach because they have to say something.

Granted, then, that a young man having sensed and understood the need, that he believes himself potentially able to meet the need, and thereby considers himself called to the ministry, what is the first essential? I answer—the discipline of study. (Don't confuse this with the study of the *Discipline*!) The answer to the question at the head of this chapter depends, in my judgment, upon this: "It is on the university, not on the theological college, that the future of English religion depends." The very fact that our theological colleges are merging more and more into the universities promises us that the way, and the means, for a greater ministry shall not only be

adequate but easily accessible. And it is also a fact that the theological schools are stressing theology less and the humanities more. Our theological leaders are right when they demand an increasingly larger amount of time spent in the arts colleges. There is no excuse to-day for a man who does not possess a background of history to his thinking to give it perspective; who does not master his own language and literature, and clothe beauty, truth, and love in their inevitable word forms; who has not learned to speak the language and follow the reasoning of the world's lovers of wisdom, her philosophers; who does not understand a few of the simple elementals of the genesis of man's dreams in art, as well as an outline at least of the world's progress of science, and something of its method; who does not try to spell out the problems, and essay some solution to the flesh and blood realities, involved in sociology, politics, economics, and kindred subjects.

Joubert, when asked, "Why is even a bad preacher heard by the pious with pleasure?" is said to have replied: "Because he talks to them about what they love." There are certain ephemeral fads which pass like startled birds,

and leave not a trace in the air behind. Preachers are to be found hooting at them as fast as they come, and dully declaiming against them: bridge and bobbed hair, cosmetics and curtailed crinolines, and all that. But all the time there are great elemental, permanent, all-absorbing loves about which man has ever been willing to be told, loves he must have revealed to him, interpreted to him, made accessible to him, else he dies!

We must have a teaching ministry, otherwise the ministry and the ministered shall both perish! Some more perfect alignment between the college and life shall have to be found. While this is being achieved, it ought to be the work of the Church to provide for its probations a greatly extended term of study in the university, accompanied by a helpful, sympathetic oversight; a seminary course of religious knowledge linking up and giving focus to the university work; and a prescribed course of preaching along the line of general culture as well as into the field of special problems, a follow-up course after graduation and when on the field. Bursaries, reasearch scholarships, cheap books—there are many ways of making



this possible, and it is not merely desirable but urgently necessary.

*The Church must not only secure men for the ministry, but secure men in the ministry.* Possibly the Northern Farmer, were he alive to-day, would say that we are right, and that there was an even greater and more vital connection between the man and his message and other men than he had fancied when he said:

Niver knaw'd whot a mean'd, but I thowt a 'ad  
summut to saây,  
And I thowt a said whot a owt to 'a said, and I  
coom'd awaây.

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"The Vocation of the Church," by J. H. Leckie. London:  
James Clarke. 1925.



CHAPTER XXVII  
THE MINISTER IN HIS WORKSHOP

I tell thee what, Antonio,  
I love thee, and it is my love that speaks—  
There are a sort of men whose visages  
Do cream and mantle like a standing pond,  
And do a wilful stillness entertain,  
With purpose to be dressed in an opinion  
Of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit;  
As who should say, "I am Sir Oracle,  
And, when I ope my lips, let no dog bark!"  
O, my Antonio, I do know of these,  
That therefore are only reputed wise  
For saying nothing.

—"Merchant of Venice," *Shakespeare*.

I have not walked on common ground  
Nor drunk of earthly streams;  
A shining figure, mailed and crowned,  
Moves softly through my dreams.

He makes the air so keen and strange,  
The stars so fiercely bright;  
The rocks of time, the tides of change,  
Are nothing in his sight.

Death lays no shadow on his smile;  
Life is a race fore-run;  
Look in his face a little while,  
And life and death are one.

—*Marjorie Pickthall*.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### THE MINISTER IN HIS WORKSHOP

So many have written regarding books; so many have inquired for "helps"; so many have wanted to know what to study and how, that, even though no one man is capable of giving an infallible answer, something can and ought to be said.

*Granted that the ministry is a calling, it is likewise a craft demanding the greatest skill, discipline, and persistence.* The preacher must compete with the novelist in human sympathy and insight. He must also compete with the scientist in his search for and discovery of truth. Every writer on the subject has emphasized over and over again the fundamental necessity of preliminary equipment. No man should think of going into the ministry to-day without putting himself in possession of every last particle of equipment he can acquire. No man should remain in the ministry who will not bend all his energies to preserve his highest possible efficiency.

*The preacher must know books.* The student never yet whined for ministerial discounts and free books. If students in other lines will make terrible sacrifices for books, the greatest teacher of them all cannot afford to be less persistent. If a man wants to study, he will find the time and the place and the price. Excuses to the contrary are empty. Men in every inconspicuous and work-ridden corner of the world are climbing to heights, and if we do not it is principally because we will not.

*The preacher must know how to choose books.* Advertisements are frequently misleading. A preacher cannot afford to buy wrong. He ought to follow very carefully the reviews of books in the better journals and magazines. Advisory services are here and there provided, which will match, if possible, the right man and the right book. Above all we will beware of buying sets of books. Never buy a set of theological books. No one set is uniformly good; besides you will never read it. You will be discouraged before you start, and besides freight will not get appreciably lower! Take a subject of present interest, or some subject you feel your lack in. Get three or four of the best

books available in this field. Work at it three months, setting yourself a time limit. In this way you will cover four problems in a year. You will have learned the discipline as well as the exhilaration of orderly and sustained study. You will set out from somewhere and arrive somewhere. You will accumulate a library in time, and not a mere batch of books. And you will become not only a preacher of power, but a finished scholar and an adornment to the Church.

*Learn how to read.* To read without making notes, without collecting your information, filing it, and making it instantly available, is wasteful and sinful. Carry a loose-leaf notebook and jot down your ideas, filing them in their proper folder. Your ideas are as good as another's: Respect them.

*Write!* Finish, precision, and strength are rarely possible without it. Careless thinking and sloppy expression will dog you otherwise.

*Have a real workbench.* Have at your elbow a little row of books which will assist you in maintaining order, lucidity, and veracity in your work. (An Atlas, World Almanac, Dictionary of Quotations, Synonyms and Anto-

nyms, Dictionary, Encyclopedia, Concordance.) Keep a list of books announced by the publishers, and then keep abreast with the best. The best way so far devised is a well-organized reading circle. Fullness of knowledge is as important as clear thinking, and one ought to be the sequel of the other. *Read current fiction less and read the dictionary more.* The minister who wastes time on current fiction, or most of it, is sinning willfully. There is no philosophy of life there that will bear scrutiny, no soul-stirring beauty, no atom of goodness you have not already worn threadbare. The preacher should be a master of words. They are found in the world's literary masterpieces. To acquire an exact knowledge of the subtleties and infinite varieties of our marvelously rich language, and of the felicities of which it is capable, go to your dictionary.

*Have a hobby.* It may be botany or astronomy, or it may be a great poet. No preacher should be ignorant of Robert Browning and Feodor Dostoevsky—that is, if he would know the heights to which the spirit of man may ascend, and the awful and abysmal depths to which he may descend, and all the time be man,



be worthy God's unending, solicitious, victorious love.

*Read history and acquire a background for your thinking*, a background which will set things in their proper place and give them their proper perspective. *Read biography*, and the world's masterpieces of *literature* and masterpieces of *eloquence*, but study *philosophy* and get your facts in order; study *psychology* and become an expert in the functioning of the mind and man's religious consciousness; study *social and political science* and become acquainted with the art of ordering human relationships.

A friend of mine says, "*Tell them to have no phone in the study.*" Unless a man is going to go right on making his intellectual toilet in the pulpit, he must study and he will have to keep his hours inviolate. The minister who loves the garish day will have an early eclipse and a long night.

Another says that *homiletic reviews*, *books of sermons*, and *ready-cooked sermonic cornflakes* will ultimately kill the preacher's mind. A man was given teeth to bite into solid food, and wisdom teeth with which to masticate it. There is a door into the ministry and also "some other

way." There is the ministry of work, and the ministry that nestles in privilege. There is a ministry of newspaper clippings and bulletin-board emotionalism, and there is a ministry of deep and profound thinking, of instruction, and therefore eternal significance.

Jowett's great phrase is, "Cases are won in chambers." Homiletic bric-a-brac, verbal filigree, theological glass-blowing, and quick-lunch "timely talks" are just synonyms for ministerial undernourishment. The majority of our popular preaching is mere quackery and deception. Life comes from life, and where the preacher has not drunk deep and long from the well of life itself, he will screech and pound and climb the chandelier to no avail. The hand he raises will be a withered hand. A minister must help men to think and understand, and how can he be of service unless he himself knows the pains of creative thought, and the wild joy of the birth of a new ideal?

Much might also be written about the *geography of the study*, the choice of rooms, its lighting and arrangement, and those important items which enter into making of it a real place of meditation, exuding the spirit of quest and

prayer. The very atmosphere of the study ought to be a constant challenge to the mind and spirit, a communion of rare friends, a parliament of the best minds of the world, an observatory and stairway to the stars, a lighthouse set with a great beacon, a throne-room for kings, and an oratory thick with the beating of invisible wings and lustrous with that "light that never was on land or sea."

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University Press. 1924.



CHAPTER XXVIII  
THE PREACHER AND HIS THEMES

1

Whoever reads these writings, wherein he is equally convinced let him go on with me.

2

Wherein he equally hesitates let him investigate with me.

3

Wherein he finds himself in error let him return to me.

4

Wherein he finds me in error let him call me back to him.

5

So let us go on together in the way of charity, pressing on toward Him of whom it is said, "Seek ye his face for evermore."—*The Five Findings of St. Augustine.*

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### THE PREACHER AND HIS THEMES

SOME months ago I received a letter from a friend of mine, "in the work," who asked me to write an article some day on "What Not to Preach On." The subject appealed to me very much. An ample notebook testifies to the fact that considerable has been done in this regard since the promise was given. Part of what I had to say on the subject appeared in a previous chapter entitled "Pulpit Vulgarity."

For convenience' sake we shall make a sort of catalogue of those "shall nots" upon which many are agreed.

1. "One of the chief elements in eloquence," said Emerson in his last public lecture, "is timeliness." The preacher must not waste time over that which is not inevitable and immediate. This timeliness is the good news that fits the hour and saves the soul.

2. He shall not cater to frivolous uses of inspired thought. In his work he may scamper about and "love the garish day," but in his

pulpit he may not be "as one that beateth the air."

3. He ought not to cover his ignorance, and his lack of the discipline of study, by leaning heavily upon homiletical helps and encyclopedias of illustrations, lest he may thereby slip into exhortation, and land in the ministerial mausoleum.

4. Noise, the lusty "ministerial yell," is a threadbare disguise, and has long since been discarded as an effective means of decoying the attention of a congregation away from the absence of thought.

5. Shun controversy. Of all nuisances the greatest is he who fans up a controversy. Ministers have been known to ride a hobby of this kind—premillennialism, tithing, baptism, amusements, low necks, and whatnot—to death, and it took three pastorates to get the old neighbors back to normalcy again.

6. Says Dr. Cadman: "If there is any man who is asinine to the limit, it is the pulpiteer who mounts the sacred desk to talk about science when he knows nothing about science." The same law applies to the fellow who would enlighten the people on modern social problems,



industrial unrest, internationalism, psychoanalysis, relativity, or anything else, before he has made a thorough study of it.

7. "If there's an ill text in all the book, the creature's aye sure to take it," said a Scottish sermon-taster, when her minister preached on temperance rather than on predestination. Others might say that the forbidden subject was politics, patriotism, or passive resistance. But Brooks helps us to see what the right way out is: "The best sermon any time is that time's best utterance. . . . Truth and timeliness together make the full preacher." The choice of a sermon ought to leave no doubt in the mind of all concerned by reason of its very urgency. Then it is that "a word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver."

8. Don't utterly defy all the laws of sequence by making "unholy alliances" between sermons and supposed texts. Garvie absolves you: "A sermon may be Christian without a text."

9. Shun the weird text as you would spectacular exegesis. Avoid denominational fanaticisms as you would the cheerful idiocy of the man who can think of nothing but his car, and talk of nothing but golf.

10. Know that the pulpit pestilence is he who fills the calendar with pettifogging appeals, picayune criticism, and nagging.

11. "Take heed to thyself and to thy teaching," said Paul to Timothy, and, one might add, thou mayest have a packed house and thy ushers shall carry in chairs. "You can sway the multitude only by working on the individual."

12. Avoid ministerial manners. They are like nothing so much as the chest of drawers which Mr. Bob Sawyer showed to Mr. Winkle in his little surgery. "Dummies, my dear boy," said he to his impressed and astonished visitor, "half the drawers have nothing in them, and the other half don't open."

13. Don't drag in yourself and your family on the slightest pretext. There are other ways of magnifying your office. "You, if you take my advice," said Socrates, "will think little about Socrates, but a great deal about truth."

14. Don't brag; some love to advertise their attainments, travels, ancestors, influential friends, and more. When tempted to be self-conceited remember the words of Brooks: "I am a minister. I bear a dignity that these

laymen cannot boast. I have an ordination which separates me unto an indefinable, mysterious privilege."

15. "The lively young preacher who spends his time scampering through the fields 'with our young people'" is as much tempted as his senior brother who glories in the fact that he has made two thousand calls, to chatter and gossip from the sacred desk.

16. Don't try to cut the grain with a sickle when you may use an up-to-date reaper. "The last word and the latest thing may be the word and the thing that saves a life." Timeliness in the message and fitness in the order of worship are more important than surveying the old landmarks. Wesley could dogmatically affirm: "Infidels know, whether Christians know it or not, that the giving up witchcraft is in effect giving up the Bible." And yet people remembered Wesley's prodigious love when they forgot his theology.

17. Thou shalt not be mighty in many books and homiletical magazines and sermon outlines and current popular fiction, and weak in the Bible, else thy friends shall find thee "seeking refuge from the difficulties of thought in the opportunities of action."

18. When the rumpus was on in Corinth we are told (1 Cor. 16: 12) that Apollos stayed out of it. "The world is wide and Apollos went elsewhere," says Robertson. It is a great thing to know when to "leave it lay."

19. "People want to be comforted. . . . They need it and do not merely long for it." (Dale.) Don't forget this when you are planning your series on the "Social Message of the Minor Prophets" or "Polemic and Politics in Paul."

20. I offer this as a New Year's resolution. The calm deliberation of my preparation shall be reflected in my pulpit bearing. The dignity I feel as one sent from so high a court will not forsake me in my pulpit manner and speech. My prayers shall be brief and void of all the old thoughtless phrases. My Scripture reading shall present startling surprises of truth in vivid form. My sermons shall be all the truth I know presented with all the consecrated personality I possess. And while the people are gathered in the attitude of worship I shall not fidget, fuss, or fiddle with notes and announcements, or fraternize with my colleague; I shall lead in the posture and spirit of worship.

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- "The Social Teaching of the Prophets and Jesus," by C. F. Kent. New York: Scribners. 1920.
- "The New Social Order," by H. F. Ward. New York: Macmillan. 1919.
- "Origin and Evolution of Religion," by E. W. Hopkins. Yale University Press. 1924.
- "A Philosophical Study of Mysticism," by C. A. Bennett. Yale University Press. 1923.
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- "The Philosophy of Conflict," by Havelock Ellis. (second series.) New York: Houghton. 1919.



CHAPTER XXIX

TWENTY THOUSAND SERMONS—  
MOSTLY DUDS

Where there is no love there is no wisdom.—  
*Feodor Dostoevsky.*

High above the morning mist,  
Wreathed in rose and amethyst,  
Still the dreams of music float  
Silver from my silver throat,  
Whispering beauty, whispering peace.  
When the great Tatwin's golden voice  
Bids the listening land rejoice,  
When great Turkeful rings and rolls  
Thunder down to trembling souls,  
Then my notes like, curlews flying,  
Lifting, falling, sinking, sighing,  
Softly answer, softly cease.  
I with all the airs at play  
Murmuring sweetly, murmuring say.  
"God around me, God above me,  
God to guard me, God to love me."

—*Marjorie Pickthall.*



## CHAPTER XXIX

### TWENTY THOUSAND SERMONS— MOSTLY DUDS

THE press generally, and occasionally a few gentle spirits here and there, have expressed unfeigned chagrin at the number of great statesmen who have succumbed to mysterious maladies. Woodrow Wilson, Paul Deschanel, Lord Northcliffe, Nicolai Lenine, Lord Curzon, and many more have suddenly disappeared from active life, and their places have been taken by others. What is this power, who is this sneak-thief that steals the vitality and the wits of strong men?

And now men are talking of the fading from the pulpit of some of the forms whose names have become household words to Christendom. What is the cause of it? Great men have come forward with reasons, and, in the Old Country press particularly, real concern is felt for the well-being of our pulpits. When men were plentiful, living grandly out of their saddlebags, and off the plain but plentiful board of country yeomen; when they received their wages pretty

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much in specie and in real old-fashioned goodwill, these diseases did not exist.

Some of the reasons for this pulpit blight are already well known. Outspoken preachers and laymen have denounced the spirit of intolerance in many congregations, which seeks to break the spirit of a man and keep him "sticking to the Bible." This tyranny is only too well known; it frowns down upon any fresh application of the principles of the kingdom of God; it sneers at any new experiment by which the Spirit of Christ might be wrought into the life of the community; it is openly hostile to any modern interpretation of the Scriptures; in short, it curbs the mind, and would squeeze the last drop of vital sap out of the heart and torture the imagination so that flight would be impossible.

Then again there is the dominance of the so-called "rich pews," and the sale of a man's individuality and holy orders to the egotistical arrogance of a few. Fortunately this is about as rare as the diplodocus.

But up speaks a layman, and he retorts that the reason for the decline and occasional fall of the preacher is, that it is too much preacher

and not enough pastor, or too much pastor and not enough minister, or too much minister and not enough man; and so on through an endless string of permutations and combinations that make us dizzy. Some, who seem to know, say that much of the punishment which the misfits in the ministry receive ought to go to the presbyteries which elect them, and to the schools which are called "divinity" and "theological." In other words, the proper plea is not made to the right parties, and the preparation to which ordinands are made to submit practically irons out the last wrinkle of common sense and affinity with common things, and sends out unsuspecting but eager souls, totally unaware of what they will have to meet, and blindly ignorant of how to approach or solve it.

Now if such chastisement is good for the ministry and its leaders, why would not a little slap on the tough part of the wrist have a salutary effect on the laymen? Then hear what Sir William Forwood of England has to say. He thinks that most ministers succumb to overwork! Yes, really, brother! And in the words of the advertisement, "There's a reason." I suppose that, since it is suggested, hundreds

will bob up and say, "Oh, I thought of that too!" Sir William indorses the words of "Ian Maclaren" when he said, "People have no idea of the mental effort and strain attaching to the work of a clergyman, who is sensible that he is a power for good, and has to live up to and get his people to live up to his ideals of what life should be." And Sir William comments, "How very pathetic." He actually believes the preacher, and what preacher cannot recall incidents where the leisure of his office was unfavorably compared with the work of those "productive callings," the farmer, the doctor, the tinker, and the tailor! Then Sir William goes on to inquire, "Can we do nothing to conserve the preaching power of our land?" The suggestions he offers are interesting. He advises ministers to draw more deeply from Robertson and the great homilies of all countries. He even advises that the authorship be not disclosed, for fear the congregation immediately lose interest and go to sleep! How often this suicidal subterfuge has been resorted to by the ministry only they themselves know. It is like fighting the battles of the Great War with the javelins of the Saracens. But we are

told of a very eloquent divine who was complimented on his sermon, and he had the courage to reply, "Yes, it is a good sermon, one of Melville's best."

Sir William Forwood's prescription simmers down simply to this. Let the minister show a greater economy of labor. If he cannot see his way clear to live off the sweat of other minds, let him sweat and work out a sermon of his own, and then use it until it wears out! I knew a student who started with a text as a funeral theme, and before he superannuated that mystery text he had trotted it out for all the great occasions of the year, Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's, Easter, and so on. Those texts are rare. Let him who can, snare the purple passage!

The story is told of a certain preacher who went up and down West Aberdeenshire always preaching on the same text: that of Elijah being sent to the widow of Zarephath, when he told her that the barrel of meal would not waste, or the cruse of oil fail, etc. Some wit immortalized the fact in verse: it deserved immortality!

We shall never be able to dispense with preachers. Christianity must always have

those who are willing to go quickly and tell. The miracle of Pentecost was a miracle of speech. And he who would also be able to say with the Master, "The words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and they are life," must know what it is to feel the life go from him. "Night," wrote Tolstoy. "To-day I left a bit of my life in my inkpot."

But the best insurance against duds, and against a wilting ministry, lies in the keeping of the congregations—a sense of mutual responsibility and a sense of sympathetic understanding. What is the matter with the preachers? we whine. Their name is Ichabod; every year twenty thousand sermons—mostly duds. And yet,

What lark could pipe, 'neath skies so dull and gray?

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"Lay Thoughts of a Dean," by W. R. Inge. London: Putnam. 1926.

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"The Eyes of Faith," by Lynn Harold Hough. New York: Abingdon. 1920.

"The Reconstruction of Religion," by C. A. Ellwood. New York: Macmillan. 1922.

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## CHAPTER XXX

### PREACHING: A CALLING AND A CRAFT

I am going to wear intellectual blinkers at the side of the eyes and my mind at least two solid hours every day in order that, absolutely impervious to wandering thoughts and scattered impressions, I may concentrate on real study. . . . If I can gain some intellectual self-respect in this way, I am then going to try to gain some spiritual efficiency. . . . I am going to try and find out what Jesus really did mean and whether his gospel works in my life.—*A Minister's New Year's Resolution.*

Lord of my heart's elation,  
Spirit of things unseen,  
Be thou my aspiration  
Consuming and serene!

Bear up, bear out, bear onward  
This mortal soul alone,  
To selfhood or oblivion,  
Incredibly thine own—  
As the foamheads are loosened  
And blown along the sea,  
Or sink and merge forever  
In that which bids them be.

—*Bliss Carman.*



## CHAPTER XXX

### PREACHING: A CALLING AND A CRAFT

PREACHING may be defined as truth, agonizing in and expressing itself through the personality. The object of preaching is likewise personality, "the creation of the nature of man into the image of God as expressed in the person of Jesus Christ."

Now, surely, if the work of the portrait painter, the composer, the sculptor, or the architect can rightly be styled art, the vocation of the preacher must also belong to the group of the fine arts. Art consists in communicating spirit, giving it utterance in others, finding for it a habitation in others. "Here in God's workroom one man is struggling to take the truth as he sees it, and build it into the nature of another man."

The late John Sargent once said that he simply reported what he saw when he painted a portrait. In the art of preaching one must certainly report with courage and fidelity what one finds to be the true life and thought. The

preacher will probably desire to add to these teaching functions the Samaritan duties of relief and service. But like Paul, being himself redeemed, he will yearn to use that same power, which operated in him with stunning force, to save others.

Books on the art of preaching too frequently stress the technical details. "Attend to your reading," was good advice for Paul to give the young Timothy. When Paul had grown old he sent for his books, which some Apostle may have borrowed for a fortnight and forgot to return. "Be apt to teach" is also sound advice, but it requires long training to qualify.

"When God wants to make an oak, he takes a hundred years; but when he wants to make a squash he takes three months." When Paul instructed Timothy to "give (himself) wholly to these things," he was not challenging his colleague to spread himself over a multitude of trivialities, to join the Rotary, attend luncheon committees, go on fifty-seven varieties of executives, and speak on anything anywhere and anytime. Paul had in mind what he once confided to Archippus—"Take heed to the ministry, which thou hast received of the Lord,

that thou fulfil it." Nehemiah had a capital answer for all and sundry who would saddle and bridle and ride him to a three-ring circus: "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down." There's a motto to hang over the telephone!

The art of preaching is not primarily concerned with books and study schedules, with gestures and voice culture. It is rather the Word become flesh. Again we see Paul had things in their right order. First, this peerless preacher agonized to be himself: "I count all things but dross that I may win Christ and be found in him." Upon this foundation experience he erects his dazzling superstructure. Confidence is given him: "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ." He never troubles about the subject of his discourse: "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel." But for fear his hearers should misunderstand and fancy that the gospel was a formula, as many good people do to-day, he made his meaning clear in these forceful words: "I charge you therefore, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead, speak the truth, be unremitting in your zeal, rebuke when

necessary, tenderly woo and urge with patience and kindness, bring strength, speak comfort, and tell the good news, and so give proof of your ministry, not in all things, but rather in the things that count."

Dr. Roland Cotton Smith, the author of "Preaching as a Fine Art," likens the preacher to the sculptor in that he has material to work upon, tools to work with, and a vision to inspire. The sermon is always a means to an end, and its real service is to prepare the soil for seed. In this connection he quotes Edgar Lee Masters' "Sir Galahad":

He had studied  
The properties of soils and fertilizers,  
And when he heard the field had failed to raise  
Potatoes, beans, and wheat, he simply said:  
There are other things to raise: the question is  
Whether the soil is suited to the things  
He tried to raise, or whether it needs building.  
. . . The field is his, he said,  
Who can make something grow.  
And so this field  
Of waving wheat along which we were  
driving  
Was just the very field the scarecrow man  
Had failed to master.

The whole question of popular pulpits resolves itself into this: there is really no sense

in talking about rights and duties, for the scarecrow man will continue to wonder why his merits are not rewarded, and the field will still belong to him who can make something grow.

A great deal of this little book ought to be quoted at length, for it is so sane and valuable. Possibly I can sum up: (1) Each one of you can be a great preacher; each one may fashion men into the likeness of Jesus Christ, "but it will take everything that is in you, your blood and sinew." (2) "You will have to toil as the great artists have to toil." (3) "You will have to cultivate literary finish and oratorical form, because the artist's tool must be perfect; but, there must be truth in you and a consuming sincerity, else there will be no value in what you do." (4) You will be an administrator and many other things perhaps, but a preacher is a preacher all the time or none of the time, and every book and every experience is contributory to this. (5) Before you prepare your sermon, take an actual man and set him before you; move out into the crowd and feel the smart of his sorrows and the burden of his problems. A preacher cannot have the half-vision and see "men as trees walking." Men

are living souls, and the preacher must give life and give that life meaning.

Most, if not all, the great preachers have been doctrinal preachers, but the doctrine is of such a quality that it has life in it, like the manna that came down from heaven in order that men might eat thereof and not die. A preacher would not tolerate personal shabbiness in his apparel. His office and the dignity of his calling would cry aloud against his carelessness in this regard. In like manner he cannot afford intellectual laziness, dowdiness, or spiritual inertia. Those preachers who have made the greatest impact upon the lives of men have one and all been thinking preachers—thought spiritualized, thought transfigured, but thought nevertheless. No preacher can claim to be an artist in his work who simply tries to hold his church and living by a solemn and weighty manner, and who expects people to assemble each Lord's day while he opens up dull and commonplace "glimpses into the obvious." There will always be found in the pulpit men who are "rough Elijahs and homespun Amoses, Gabriels with flaming sword as well as flower-laden Sandalphons." Yet, that which makes

them deserving of respect is, that they have beheld the vision and in varying voices know how to show it in all reality and sincerity.

The preacher who would be an artist must decide for himself the answer he would give to the question, "Am I prepared to know?" The habitual frame of mind of the preacher ought to be one of wide-open hospitality. It is not so important that one should be a learned man, though that may ultimately be a goal of effort, but meantime it is absolutely necessary that one should be a learning man. "But if he stands at the steps of the pulpit in the spirit of an artist, with a vision that comes with the realization of the image of God within him, and a consuming and overmastering passion to bring out that image in other men; if he comes sweating, as it were, great drops of blood from the dashing of himself against a hard, cruel, cold humanity, with the unconquerable faith that never forgets the image within the stone; if he has heard some particular cry and has wrestled with an individual man to turn him around and make him see, then the doors of the pulpit are thrown open to him and he ascends his throne with power—a throne that no other

artist dare ascend, for the materials are living souls, and the tools are words tipped with spirit, and the purpose is participation in the creation of the image of God.

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"Preaching as a Fine Art," by R. C. Smith. New York: Macmillan. 1922.



CHAPTER XXXI  
JESUS AS A PREACHER

Oh, speak thro' me now!  
 Would I suffer for him that I love? So wouldst  
 Thou—so wilt Thou!  
 So shall crown Thee the topmost, ineffablest,  
 uttermost crown—  
 And thy love fill infinitude wholly, nor leave up nor  
 down  
 One spot for the creature to stand in!  
 . . . . .  
 'Tis the weakness in strength, that I cry for! my  
 flesh, that I seek  
 In the Godhead! I seek and I find it. O soul, it  
 shall be  
 A Face like my face that receives thee; a Man  
 like me,  
 Thou shalt love and be loved by, forever; a hand  
 like this hand  
 Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee!  
 See the Christ stand!

—*Robert Browning.*

Jesus, the artist, was a preacher all the time.  
 He preached on any day and every day of the  
 week, for he had the one consuming passion of the  
 artist—to create. Here within the nature of man  
 was a divine image, hidden within the darkness  
 of the material; here within himself was the whole  
 image seeing, seeing his Father God and the whole  
 invisible world within and about the visible—He  
 flung himself with a divine fury against a moun-  
 tain of materialism, bruised and battered by the  
 resisting shore, but never losing the artist faith  
 that he, the image of God, was in the mountain  
 of the multitude.—*Preaching as a Fine Art.* (R.  
 C. Cotton.)

## CHAPTER XXXI

### JESUS AS A PREACHER

DR. DALE once said that he read every book on preaching which came his way, and that he never read one without learning something from it. After all, the best book of preaching is the book with which one is, above all others, required to be most familiar—the Bible.

Sir William Robertson Nicoll, in reviewing Prof. George Jackson's Fernley lecture, "The Preacher and the Modern Mind," stressed the fact that it is not the truth which has to be revised and changed, but the modern mind which has to be adapted to the eternal realities. In another chapter we endeavored to explain Paul's idea of a preaching ministry, and it was clear, to the writer at least, that the message and the method of great preaching had not changed in nineteen centuries. With many another fact we come to understand that "the Word of God, which is its own evidence, is kept waiting for a hearing till we have completed the education of some one who understands with his modern mind how God can speak at all.

The successful preacher is he who knows that God has spoken, and who dares not keep silence. To Jeremiah the word of God was a burning fire shut up in his bones; to St. Paul it was a divine ultimatum, "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel." Nothing is said of dogmatics, of Scriptural inerrancy, of scientific infallibility. The Bible never intended to be more than the record of a progressive experience of the life of God in the lives of men. This is not doctrinal; it is a fact. One may or may not be able to define this, or account for that, in terms acceptable to the most conservative dogmatist or the extremest radical. One may understand, however, that "through the Scriptures he has dealings with the living God."

This was the seal to the preëminence of Jesus's preaching. He criticized and jettisoned a good deal of the old. He was radical to the point of apparent irreverence. No man ever took "the modern mind" more into account. But no teacher or preacher ever got so near the truth of truths which all words fail to express; the truth of truths which is both inspired and infallible as well as unchangeable. This is the meaning of the only liberalism and modernism

that counts for anything. The shoddy skepticism that gloats (in the pulpit) over textual inaccuracies, the pompous modernism that takes its cue from the vulgarity of the evening paper, the liberalism that roams the world with no eye for the enduring landmarks—such deserve the odium of all true scholarship.

The Bible was the basis for the whole spiritual superstructure which Jesus raised. He never for a moment confused literary forms with living realities. He was a poet at heart, and as Marjorie Pickthall points out, in one of her inimitable letters, while he admired the robust virtues of others among his disciples, it was John, the poet-minded, he loved. He did not preach on literature, but used it, as Paul did, to drive more forcibly home his great convictions regarding life.

A good deal has been said, at one time or another, regarding the authoritativeness of Jesus's preaching. "Ye have heard—I say." His original method and interpretations have, too, been frequently stressed. His spontaneity showed him alive to every passing movement of time. He was gracious and sweetly reasonable, marrying charm to power and loveliness

to severity. His utterances were timely, pregnant, and pithily clear. Epigram, paradox, metaphor, and sparkling illustration enlivened and enforced his compact logic. Argument immediately found its true commentary in characteristic benevolence and service, while the mysteries and imponderables were cleared away, not by writing puzzles in the sand, but in the transcendent beauty of fellowship and by unshakable trust and understanding. The real clue to the success of Jesus as a preacher is his mind. He never claimed omniscience, but he did isolate certain truths and bring to them such tremendous significance that the greatest wisdom since his day has not desired all knowledge, but a vaster thing—"the mind of Christ." Similarly, to speak of the sinlessness of Jesus is a waste of time. They killed him as being chief of sinners. Sin is a relative term. He certainly experienced conflict, and triumphed. He had seen evil stalk before him as a living thing. He knew what it was to feel absolutely alone and bereft, as he fought the fiend of temptation. When Satan tempted him on that occasion, on which the universe became a veritable wilderness in his loneliness and agony,

he looked, if any man ever did, into the bottomless pit, and shuddered. Godhood does not guarantee immunity.

And so it was that *winning* souls took on a tremendous, eternal significance for Jesus. Where he could not woo he whipped, when argument and sweet reasonableness failed he let fly the lightning of his sarcasm and scorn. Jesus knew sin when he saw it; called it by its right name; leaped upon it like a God to destroy it, before it destroyed those whom he loved more than life itself. Sinlessness is a negative idea, and with it, as with all such negative concepts, he was not at all concerned. He never taught and never lived a negative purity. The cross is the tragic proof of the contrary.

Just as his death became forever the symbol of deathlessness, so his ideas about sin swept through the bounds of Judaism and over the world with a triumphant shout. Sin was still terrible and judgment awful; but those who learn to understand the mind of God, and undertake the will of Him whose mind is love, will find at his disposal a gracious power of deliverance. Faith reached up, love reached down, and man became himself when God became man. For sin Jesus had but one effec-

tive cure. The preaching of Jesus was memorable for what he said and was. God, love, value, man, sin, society, reconciliation, and redemption—these words can never receive their true and eternal interpretation apart from the life that chose the cross. His realist preaching was his own radiant personality, and for our sake it broke through death and walks the highways of to-day a little on before. "His companions became the core of his Church only because of the founding of the kingdom in the mortal dead whose victory could not be holden of death, and whose truth, buried by old Israel, came to itself as power in the creation of a New Society to be the earnest of the New Humanity. In the work of Christ his words also rose again from the dead to an immortal life and power." (P. T. Forsyth.)

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